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A CASE STUDY IN COERCIVE POWER CONSOLIDATION

BY

Mark Jonathan Roberts

March 1994

Thesis Advisor:

Ralph H. Magnus

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**The Iranian Revolution:  
A Case Study in  
Coercive Power Consolidation**

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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from the

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## ABSTRACT

The author examines the Khomeini Regime's process of power consolidation before, during, and after the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Using this event as a case study in coercive power consolidation, the author determines the Khomeini Regime's co-optation and incorporation (through coercion and persuasion) of the Iranian military was the first and crucial step in this process. He further examines the Islamic Republic of Iran's use of the military to then consolidate its power by suppressing ethnic minorities, political opposition groups, and religious minorities. Throughout the thesis, the Khomeini Regime's practice of demonizing its enemies will be examined as a principle component of the power consolidation process. The major conclusion of this study is that the essence of regime legitimization was grounded in the incorporation of the army as a necessary element of power. The regime then used the army to suppress those elements of society that it deemed threatening or unnecessary.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The author examines the Khomeini Regime's process of power consolidation before, during, and after the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Using this event as a case study in coercive power consolidation, the author determines the Khomeini Regime's co-optation and incorporation (through coercion and persuasion) of the Iranian military was the first and crucial step in this process. This co-optation and incorporation was made possible through inherent structural defects within the military command and control hierarchy. The Shah's compartmentation of the military leadership to avoid a coup (such as the one that brought him to power) served to isolate the military branches from each other and Iranian society. The author further examines the Islamic Republic of Iran's use of the military to then consolidate its power by suppressing ethnic minorities (Kurds, Azerbaijanis, Turkomans, Baluchis and Arabs), political opposition groups (Tudeh, Mujaheddin-e-Khalq and Fedayeen-e-Khalq), and religious minorities (Baha'is and Jews) after they had been deemed "un-Islamic" and "corrupt". Throughout the thesis, the Khomeini Regime's practice of demonizing its enemies is examined as a principal component of the power consolidation process. This phenomenon is examined as the process by which the above-mentioned groups evolved from being "brothers in Islam" to "enemies of the revolution" to "enemies of the messenger of God" to "enemies of God" and "corruption on earth" and how they were neutralized. By

neutralizing these various elements, the Islamic Republic purged all ideologically or theologically "impure" groups that could pose a challenge to its legitimacy. The major conclusion of this study is that the essence of regime legitimization was grounded in the incorporation of the army as a necessary element of power. Having secured the state's most potent coercive arm unto itself, the regime then used the army to suppress those elements of society that it deemed threatening or unnecessary in its efforts to remake and recast Iranian society into a more "Islamic" mold.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 produced far-reaching changes throughout Persian society whose impact will be felt for many years. Concerning those who participated in the early phases of the revolution, there was "hardly a religious, tribal, or ethnic minority that was not represented."<sup>1</sup> As directed by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Iranian Revolution became associated in the minds of many with Shi'i Islam. However, there were other factors that had a hand in the revolution's development.

Shi'i Muslims were not the only persons participating in the revolution, nor was Shi'i ideology the only ideology prompting revolutionary action. Leftists, liberals, and nationalists of a whole range of political persuasions were active, on the basis of secular ideologies alone or in conjunction with religious ideas. Even within the Shi'i Muslim community, the approach to Islam and politics was hardly monolithic.<sup>2</sup>

This paper proposes to examine the coercive aspects of how the Islamic Republic of Iran consolidated its power following the revolution that ousted the Shah. This study will posit that the new regime, after first co-opting the military unto itself, then used the military to pursue a campaign to eradicate all potential competition. This was accomplished by waging a multi-pillared policy aimed at ethnic minorities, political opposition groups and religious minorities.

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<sup>1</sup>Hegland, Mary, "Two Images of Husain: Accommodation and Revolution in an Iranian Village," Keddie, Nikki R., ed., Religion and Politics in Iran: Shi'ism from Quietism to Revolution (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 218.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 219.

These purges were undertaken because "the revolutionary government considered the unity of Iran vital to its national security,"<sup>3</sup> and even went as far as to claim that "abuses of human rights were all defended as necessary to safeguard the Revolution."<sup>4</sup>

Not only did the Islamic Republic of Iran wage a vigorous campaign against perceived and real threats, it labeled any disagreement with its policies as "un-Islamic" or "counterrevolutionary," which "narrowed the range of permissible discourse"<sup>5</sup> to the extent that

The loss of individual rights has been accompanied by a suspension of all objective moral judgements on the part of the regime, which has enabled it to conduct a reign of terror against non-Shiite Muslim minorities, against non-Muslim minorities, and against anyone accused of fasad fil-ard ("causing corruption in the land"); in short, against anyone whose views deviate from "the Imam's line."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Kechichian, Joseph A. and Sadri, Houman, "National Security," Metz, Helen Chapin, ed., Iran: A Country Study (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1989), p. 296.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 297.

<sup>5</sup>Keddie, Roots of Revolution: An Interpretive History of Modern Iran (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 230.

<sup>6</sup>Savory, Roger, "Ex Oriente Nebula: An Inquiry into the Nature of Khomeini's Ideology," Chelkowski, Peter J. and Pranger, Robert J., eds., Ideology and Power in the Middle East: Studies in Honor of George Lenczowski (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1988), p. 349.



## II. THE ARMED FORCES

In a discussion of her book States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China, Theda Skocpol states

the repressive state organizations of the prerevolutionary regime have to be weakened before mass revolutionary action can succeed, or even emerge. Indeed, historically, mass rebellious action has not been able, in itself, to overcome state repression. Instead, military pressures from abroad...have been necessary to undermine repression.<sup>7</sup>

In another article, she further clarifies this by stating that the "centralized, semi-bureaucratic administrative and military organizations of the old regimes disintegrated due to combinations of international pressures and disputes between the monarchs and landed commercial upper classes."<sup>8</sup>

Placed in the context of the Iranian Revolution, Skocpol's theory that in order for the revolution to succeed, the military had to have disintegrated due to outside pressures, did not apply. As a result, the following question arises: Given that the Pahlavi Regime had the most powerful, well-

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<sup>7</sup>Skocpol, Theda, "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution," Theory and Society, 2, No.3 (May 1982), p. 266 and States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

<sup>8</sup>Skocpol, "Social Revolutions and Mass Military Mobilizations," World Politics, Vol. XL, No. 2 (January 1988) p. 151.

equipped, and well trained military machine in the Persian Gulf,<sup>9</sup> how did the Khomeini Regime neutralize (politically, socially, and militarily) the armed forces of the Pahlavi Regime?<sup>10</sup> This must be considered in light of the fact that "the least likely of all scenarios generally was thought to be one in which the trained and elaborately equipped military forces of the Shah would fail at the eleventh hour to save the monarchy or at least to be in the vanguard of its replacement."<sup>11</sup>

This section of the paper will argue that the Iranian Revolution succeeded not only in spite of the armed forces, but because of them. It will do so by first outlining the inherent structural defects of the Shah's military hierarchy that led to the political emasculation of the armed forces. This was due to the Shah's personal control of and involvement in the command and control structure. Additionally, the Shah's insistence that all armed forces heads deal with him

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<sup>9</sup>Kechichian and Sadri, "National Security," from Metz, ed., Iran, p. 237 and Wright, Robin, In the Name of God: The Khomeini Decade (New York: Touchstone, 1989), p. 84.

<sup>10</sup>The question may also be asked inversely: Why did the Pahlavi Regime (with its powerful, well-equipped, well-trained armed forces, which were the most important pillar upon which its power rested), allow the Khomeini regime to politically and socially emasculate its military forces?

<sup>11</sup>Noyes, James H., The Clouded Lens: Persian Gulf Security and U.S. Policy, Second Edition (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1982), p. 112.

directly on all matters and his prohibition on direct contact between service chiefs will be examined as a factor that prevented effective coordination to counter the revolution, even during a time of military rule.<sup>12</sup>

This section of the paper will further argue that the Khomeini Regime, having identified the incorporation of the armed forces into its power structure as the key to successful power consolidation, took active measures before and during the Revolution to do so. It did so by appealing to the armed forces, who were the backbone of the Shah's regime,<sup>13</sup> to desert the monarch during the last days of the Pahlavi Regime and join with the Imam's forces.<sup>14</sup>

This section of the paper will then show that, in contradiction to Skocpol's theory, the Khomeini Regime came to

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<sup>12</sup>It could be argued that a well coordinated military response was not necessary to quell the unarmed, civilian population because a section of any one of the armed services could have done so. While this is true, the answer that will be explored will be the lack of decisive leadership on one hand and psychological dependence upon the Shah on the other. Both of these factors synergistically combined to make the armed forces incapable of independently responding to the uprisings.

<sup>13</sup>Amuzegar, Jahangir, The Dynamics of the Iranian Revolution: The Pahlavis' Triumph and Tragedy (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991), 157.

<sup>14</sup>Due to the Shah's compartmentation of the armed forces and his repressive policies towards the Iranian populace, these broadcasts found a receptive audience among the younger, less traditional members of the military. Since they were not among the established hierarchy of the upper levels of the Pahlavi Regime, these messages found a fertile, moldable audience.

power in spite of the Shah's armed forces. Once in power, it incorporated the armed forces unto itself. It then left the basic infrastructure of the armed forces intact while purging the monarchists from the upper ranks. Replacing the monarchists with "ideologically pure" officers, it then used the armed forces as its primary tool to consolidate the power of the Khomeini Regime over other elements of society. Through a later "ideological purge," it further ensured military loyalty to the government. In this manner, the Iranian Revolution succeeded not only in spite of the armed forces, but because of them.

In the wake of the purges, the Khomeini Regime and the armed forces were drawn even closer together through the Iran-Iraq War as the new regime found itself relying on the military expertise of the ancien regime to defend Iran in a fight for national survival. This wartime experience resulted in the armed forces further solidifying as an arm of the nascent Islamic Republic.

#### A. PRE-REVOLUTIONARY SCENARIO

Since both the Shah and his father came into power due to military coups, the Shah's main pillar of support was based in the armed forces,<sup>15</sup> whom he directly supervised.<sup>16</sup> The

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<sup>15</sup>Richards, Alan and Waterbury, John, A Political Economy of the Middle East: State, Class, and Economic Development, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), p. 354.

Shah's hold on the armed forces was grounded in his intense personal supervision of military affairs to the extent that he "insisted that the commanders of the army, navy, and air force report to him separately rather than act jointly."<sup>17</sup> His compartmentation of the military was based (ironically) on fears of a military coup and led him to distrust his own hand-picked generals<sup>18</sup> to the extent that "the shah trusted almost no one and assumed disloyalty even among his closest officers."<sup>19</sup> Despite the Shah's paranoia, the military assumed even more importance with the passage of time and became his most important pillar, upon which his "survival critically depended."<sup>20</sup>

The Shah ensured loyalty to himself by applying the divide and rule principle among his generals. He accomplished this by exacerbating personal rivalries among his generals and placed "personal enemies alternately in the chain of command"

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<sup>16</sup>Ibrahim, Youssef M., "Ex-Premier Hoveida Is Executed in Iran After Closed Trial," New York Times, April 8, 1979, p. 14.

<sup>17</sup>Lenczowski, George, American Presidents and the Middle East, (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990), p. 190.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Cottam, Richard W., Iran and the United States: A Cold War Case Study (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988), p. 128.

<sup>20</sup>Arjomand, Said Amir, The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc, 1988), p. 119.

to preclude the possibility of a coup.<sup>21</sup> Although he was never ousted by a coup, his preventive measures prevented communications within the branches of the armed forces, leading to their utter psychological dependence upon him for any type of decision.

The upper echelon of the officer corps was loyal to the monarch, who personally approved the promotion of all officers above the rank of major.<sup>22</sup> Towards the latter part of the seventies, many junior officers were judged to be less politically reliable due to their university backgrounds.<sup>23</sup>

In terms of military capability, the Iranian armed forces had been seasoned with recent combat experience in Oman, where over 35,000 troops had assisted in the suppression of a Communist-supported rebellion in the southern region of Dhofar.<sup>24</sup> The advanced level of military technology was also evident in the Iranian Air Force, who possessed a formidable arsenal of state of the art weaponry.<sup>25</sup> This advanced

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>22</sup>Gage, Nicholas, "U.S.-Iran Links Still Strong," New York Times, July 9, 1979, p. 10.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid. At the universities, these junior officers had been exposed to the various anti-Shah factions (leftist and Islamic) that were prevalent in the late seventies.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid. The article states the Iranian Air Force had 141 F-4's and 60 F-14's with 20 more F-14's and 160 F-16's to be delivered. At the time of the article, these airframes were among the most

weaponry was a result of many years of expenditures which consumed a great part of Iran's national income to fuel the Shah's regional ambitions.<sup>26</sup> Through his efforts, the Shah "sought to make the Iranian military the dominant force in the Gulf and....the purchase of arms and military technology ran at more than \$4 billion per annum."<sup>27</sup> In spite of its advanced state of readiness in terms of weapons, size and training, the military had no well developed sense of institutional identity due to the Shah's paranoid compartmentation and divide and rule policies.<sup>28</sup> For this reason, the armed forces, although militarily proficient, were lacking in any independent decision making capability, a

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advanced (and therefore coveted) in the non-Soviet world's air forces. Another New York Times article by noted military affairs correspondent Drew Middleton (November 6, 1978, p. 18) stated the Iranian Army had "the most advanced arms of any Asian country east of Israel," stating it had 1,620 tanks (compared to 2,500 NATO tanks in Central Europe) and 459 combat airplanes (Israel had only 84 more). The Middleton article, "Both East and West Regard Iran As Pivotal in the Power Balance," also estimated the Iranian military's size at 413,000 soldiers, sailors and airmen. The Army included three armored divisions, three infantry divisions, and four independent brigades, making it "the most powerful for its size in Asia," according to Middleton's citation of American and British advisors.

<sup>26</sup>Fuller, Graham E., The Center of the Universe: The Geopolitics of Iran, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), p. 49.

<sup>27</sup>Richards and Waterbury, A Political Economy of the Middle East, p. 364.

<sup>28</sup>Owen, Roger, State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1992), p. 217.

factor which would weigh heavily against them during the fall of the monarchy.

Cracks in the seemingly unassailable structure appeared in May of 1978, when two former Iranian Army officers, Lieutenant Mehrdad Pakzad and Captain Hamzeh Farahati, disclosed at a press conference in London that many in the Iranian armed forces did "not believe in the regime at all,"<sup>29</sup> and that the Iranian armed forces were rife with widespread discontent. They also alleged that they had not been allowed to resign their commissions and had eventually been imprisoned and tortured for "reading Marxist books,"<sup>30</sup> a charge they denied.

In September of 1978, Ayatollah Khomeini gave a speech coinciding with the end of Ramadan in which he proactively exhorted the Iranian armed forces to throw off the Shah's "yoke of slavery and humiliation" to join with their brothers.<sup>31</sup> In October of 1978, Ayatollah Khomeini again denounced elements of the Iranian Army, stating that they were

in reality under American command - it is even led at the upper echelons by American advisers and technicians  
....But there have already been, among officers and

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<sup>29</sup>Mortimer, Edward, "Unrest in Iranian Army described," Times, May 18, 1978, p. 6.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Imam Khomeini, Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations, translated and annotated by Hamid Algar (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 236.



soldiers, evident signs of trouble as the popular revolt mounts.<sup>32</sup>

## B. MILITARY RULE

On November 6, 1978, the Shah placed Iran under military rule due to the growing discontent and violent nature of the opposition's anti-government activities. Upon the declaration of military rule, opposition leaders urged their followers to avoid confrontations with troops.<sup>33</sup> At that point, the Shah's hold on power was primarily attributed to the allegiance of the military.<sup>34</sup>

During the rash of anti-Pahlavi demonstrations that occurred throughout the Fall of 1978, the Shah demonstrated his indecisiveness as he used the military inconsistently against his own people, giving United States intelligence false signals regarding the threat to the monarchy

Circularity was the most common feature of the analysis; it started with the fact that the Shah had the security and military forces, and went on to assume that he would use them as necessary. Because the Shah was not using force, the analysis continued, the opposition then was obviously no threat. This was a circle that couldn't be broken into. The Shah's failure to act was taken as proof

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<sup>32</sup>Kandell, Jonathan, New York Times, October 19, 1978, p. 14. Although it was true that American advisors and technicians were to be found at the upper echelons of the Iranian military, they by no means led it or were in any situation to exercise command.

<sup>33</sup>Gage, "Shah Puts Military in Control in Iran; U.S. Endorses Move," New York Times, November 7, 1978, p. 14.

<sup>34</sup>Gage, "Hopes Fading for a Negotiated Settlement in Iran as Shah Turns to Army," New York Times, November 6, 1978, p. 18.

that things were okay. The unasked question was, What inhibitions on the Shah kept him from using force to stay in power?<sup>35</sup>

This refusal to use the military to suppress the opposition was later assessed to be one of the Shah's critical mistakes in light of the fact that the military remained loyal to him until he departed. His reticence to use the military for suppression of civil unrest also enraged his hard-line generals, who favored harsh measures to retain the monarch's power.<sup>36</sup>

As tensions mounted in Iran between the Shah and the factions within society who opposed him, Khomeini (from Paris) called on the Shah's soldiers to desert their barracks, stop helping the "traitor shah" and to "unite with the people" in order to undermine the monarch's power.<sup>37</sup> In doing so, Khomeini correctly identified the Army as the "key to the success of the revolution"<sup>38</sup> and the element that would ensure the consolidation of power. He then "acted swiftly to

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<sup>35</sup>Woodward, Bob, Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981-1987, (New York: Pocket Books, 1987), p. 108.

<sup>36</sup>Arjomand, The Turban for the Crown, p. 120. In a discussion of this topic, Arjomand posits that the Shah simply lacked the nerve to employ his military against the populace.

<sup>37</sup>"Khomeyni Calls on Shah's Soldiers to Desert," Paris AFP in English, Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), 1436 GMT, 03 Dec 78 (TA031441Y), December 4, 1978, pp. R3-4.

<sup>38</sup>Sick, Gary, All Fall Down: America's Tragic Encounter With Iran, with a New Introduction by the Author (Harrisonburg, VA: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 98.

neutralize the military"<sup>39</sup> in order incorporate it into the new power structure. Part of Khomeini's strategy for accomplishing this incorporation was based on the fact that

Khomeini was also cognizant that without the armed forces' assistance, the leftists and autonomy-seeking ethnic minorities could undermine the Islamic Revolution. Thus, he pursued a...policy...to maintain the institutional integrity of the armed forces while purging them of monarchists...Despite the purges, the structural cohesion of the armed forces remained intact.<sup>40</sup>

Due to constant appeals from anti-Shah factions to the armed forces to desert, the Information Ministry issued a series of desperate communiques in mid-December denying reports that the Iranian Army was on the verge of mutiny.<sup>41</sup>

Responding in kind, the anti-government forces waged their own propaganda campaign to foment dissent within the ranks of the Iranian Army. The opposition accused the Pahlavi regime of pitting the Army against the people in order to bring about a schism to separate the junior members of the armed forces

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid. p. 97.

<sup>40</sup>Milani, Mohsen M., The Making of Iran's Islamic Revolution: From Monarchy to Islamic Republic (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), p. 258.

<sup>41</sup>"Tehran Commentary: Nations's Soldiers Will Not Relax Vigilance," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1430 GMT, 08 Dec 78 (LD081602Y), December 13, 1978, p. R8 and "AFP: Government Denies Report of Mutiny in Army," Paris AFP in English, FBIS, 1348 GMT, 16 Dec 78 (TA161404Y), December 18, 1978, p. R2. Both of these refute anti-government claims concerning armed forces desertion. The first one addresses at length the loyal and noble character of the Iranian soldier, calling him a "high-flying phoenix across whose path no desperate cunning and treachery by the servants of the foreigner could ever set a snare."

against their own families. The opposition appealed to the "patriotic soldiers and noncommissioned officers of our homeland" to leave the forces of "a despotic, bloodthirsty regime" and join them to place themselves "on the side of the nation."<sup>42</sup>

As the levels of intensity against anti-government demonstrations increased, reticence on the part of soldiers to fire upon their countrymen became a topic of anti-government broadcasts. These broadcasts exacerbated uncertainty within the armed forces, who lacked clear leadership and decisiveness on the part of the upper echelons directing them. These broadcasts also emphasized the refusal of many soldiers to obey direct orders from their commanding officers, especially if the order concerned firing upon unarmed demonstrators.

The religious leaders and national forces have called on the army men to carry out their national and religious duty to Iran and the Iranian people by disobeying the orders of the black generals of the shah's court and by joining the people. The soldiers, officers and army men are the children of the Iranian nation and cannot remain indifferent to the bloody events in the realm and the call--the invitation--of the national and religious leaders. The day is not far away when the army men, by fully joining the ranks of the people, will cast the heads of this bloodshedding regime and its criminal generals into the trash can of history.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>"National Voice of Iran Urges Soldiers to Abandon Regime," National Voice of Iran (Clandestine) in Persian to Iran, FBIS, 1730 GMT, 05 Dec 78 (LD190052Y), December 19, 1978, pp. R11-12.

<sup>43</sup>"National Voice of Iran on Mutiny in Armed Forces," National Voice of Iran (Clandestine) in Persian to Iran, FBIS, 1730 GMT, 15 Dec 78 (LD221830Y), December 27, 1978, pp. R8-10.

In the face of continuing unrest, elements of the armed forces continued to rebel, in many cases refusing to fire on anti-government demonstrators and also deserting. In some instances, the government kept the soldiers in their barracks rather than send them into the streets to combat the demonstrators. The fear that the soldiers would heed the calls of the demonstrators to hold their fire and desert was stronger than the need to quell the unrest.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, the military forces were trained in conventional warfare, not non-lethal riot control techniques. For this reason, military responses to anti-Pahlavi demonstrations tended to be harsh and repressive, which evoked strong responses from the Iranian populace and the world community.<sup>45</sup> This also served to further confuse and alienate many of the younger soldiers.

The blame for this can not be attributed to a lack of effort on the part of many senior military leaders. They repeatedly asked for riot control equipment and training but their requests were denied time and again.<sup>46</sup> In fact, the very orientation of the armed forces was not geared towards an

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<sup>44</sup>Apple, R.W. Jr., "Shah's Army Is Showing Stress," New York Times, December 19, 1978, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup>Lenczowski, American Presidents and the Middle East, p. 189, Cottam, Iran and the United States, p. 134, and Arjomand The Turban for the Crown, p. 120.

<sup>46</sup>Rubin, Barry, Paved With Good Intentions: The American Experience and Iran (Dallas, PA: Penguin Books, 1980), p. 227.

internal threat, but rather an external one. The result of this policy was that "weapons and training for domestic disturbances were not emphasized."<sup>47</sup> The outward orientation meant that the military was "organized for the wrong war" in which its response to internal dissent was much less effective than a foreign invasion scenario.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, the internal strife tended to confuse the priorities of many soldiers, rendering them ineffective.

The differences between regular officers and the (conscripted) soldiers were exacerbated as well during the period of unrest preceding the departure of the Shah. The cracks and fissures in the military were partially due to the fact that the regular officers were part of an elite class that lived a separate existence from the men they commanded. They enjoyed access to free medical care, generous pay, and special commodities. On the other hand, the conscripts were paid very little and were drawn from the same elements of society as the demonstrators, with whom they were able to identify more easily.<sup>49</sup> As the demonstrations continued, the

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<sup>47</sup>Hickman, William F., Ravaged and Reborn: The Iranian Army, 1982 (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1982), p. 3.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid. There were many examples during the anti-government demonstrations of conscripts being in a position where they had to choose between disobeying an order or suppressing (in some manner) a relative or friend.

army came to be regarded as the force that prevented the country from sinking into utter chaos.<sup>50</sup>

As the crisis wore on, reports of soldiers defecting began to circulate. Additionally, soldiers began to shoot other soldiers to prevent them from firing on the anti-government protestors and army units began to disobey orders to quell the protests. This had the effect of undermining esprit de corps and military discipline, as well as making the soldiers more susceptible to dissident propaganda broadcasts. From exile in Paris, Ayatollah Khomeini called for the soldiers to desert and join the opposition<sup>51</sup>. Ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri stated that Khomeini's appeals to the army were having an impact:

There is a spirit of rebellion inside the army...and if an Islamic government is installed in Iran, these soldiers and young officers will obey and follow the leaders who follow Khomeini's instructions.<sup>52</sup>

Amidst speculation concerning the imminent departure of the Shah in early 1979, senior offices in the armed forces expressed their dismay at the possibility of a new civilian government. Their fears were based in apprehension concerning their collective and individual fates. With the Shah gone,

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Gage, "Iranians Observe Day of Mourning for Dead in Revolt," New York Times, December 19, 1978, p. 3.

<sup>52</sup>"Religious Leader from Iran Says Torture Made Him Nearly Deaf," New York Times, December 20, 1978, p. 5.

the military would have to negotiate with the new government for control of the military budget. Additionally, the military had borne the brunt of anti-Pahlavi sentiment and had maintained internal discipline principally because of a sense of loyalty to the Shah. With his departure, the military feared being dismembered at the hands of a new regime as well as at the hands of the populace.<sup>53</sup> The military, due to its compartmentalized nature, also feared corporate inertia and an institutionalized inability to act, as well as internal rivalries that would render them useless.<sup>54</sup>

On January 4, 1979, General Gholam Ali Oveissi, the Iranian Army Commander and martial-law administrator of Tehran resigned. The General cited health reasons as the cause of his resignation. He was disliked by the populace for his hard-line views and he was vehemently opposed to any abdication of power by the Shah.<sup>55</sup> His resignation, in the

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<sup>53</sup>In terms of weaponry, the military did not fear the populace. Their concern was that with the Shah removed from their future, discipline would erode and they would be unable to withstand popular demands for justice due to the armed forces' role in suppressing anti-Pahlavi sentiment.

<sup>54</sup>Gage, "Trip for Shah: Some Say 'No,'" New York Times, January 5, 1979, p. 6.

<sup>55</sup>Pace, Eric, "Shah Is Reported on Brief Vacation at Iranian Resort," New York Times, January 5, 1979, p. 6. In and of itself, the General's resignation would have been a negligible footnote. However, in the context of political and societal turmoil, his resignation took on another significance in terms of lowering the morale of the soldiers he commanded.



opinion of Carter Administration officials, reduced the possibilities of strong military opposition to a post-Pahlavi regime.<sup>56</sup>

On January 6, Prime Minister Shahpur Bakhtiar named General Feridun Djam as War Minister. General Djam a former Chief of Staff who had been dismissed in 1971 by the Shah for being "too good, too competent, too popular, too much his own man."<sup>57</sup> Bakhtiar also named Lieutenant General Mehdi Rahemi Larijani as General Oveissi's successor to the post of military governor of Tehran. Larijani had been Oveissi's deputy and was considered more moderate than his former commander.<sup>58</sup>

The situation became so serious in the eyes of the Carter Administration that Air Force General Robert E. Huyser, Deputy Commander of the United States European Command, was dispatched to Tehran to urge the armed forces to unite behind the new government. General Huyser reportedly spoke with new Chief of Staff General Abbas Gharabaghi, exhorting him to

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<sup>56</sup>Gwertzman, Bernard, "U.S. Will Cooperate With A New Regime If Shah Stays Or Not," New York Times, January 5, 1979. p. 6.

<sup>57</sup>Apple, "New Iran Cabinet Unable to Bring in Main Opposition," New York Times, January 7, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>58</sup>Gage, "Bakhtiar Installed And Shah Declares He'll Take A Rest," New York Times, January 7, 1979, p. 4.

avoid precipitous military actions, especially a coup, which would lead to a curtailment of American military aid.<sup>59</sup>

On January 10, former Imperial Guard Command General Abdollah Badrai was named as Commander of the Iranian Army (Ground Forces Commander), replacing General Oveissi in that position.<sup>60</sup> General Badrai assumed command as Prime Minister Bakhtiar's power waned. Bakhtiar was viewed as impotent in the wake of a remark by a general who publicly stated that the army would refuse to follow Bakhtiar. Instead of a harsh reprimand, the Shah promoted the general who made the remark, further undermining Bakhtiar's position.<sup>61</sup>

As the controversy over a possible military coup was debated, reports began to filter in from Kuwait that over 50 Iranian Army officers had deserted in recent weeks. The Iranian authorities had been reticent to take any steps

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<sup>59</sup>Apple, "Fresh Street Violence Greet New Iranian Regime," New York Times, January 8, 1979, p. 4. Although publicly General Huyser decried the possibility of a coup, numerous sources have pointed out that Huyser was acting as the representative of the United States to formulate options which included "[A] encourage the Iranian military to support Bakhtiar's civilian government; [B] plan for possible direct military action if required to bolster the civilian regime [C] support a military takeover by Iranian forces if public order collapsed." Citation from Sick, All Fall Down, p. 163.

<sup>60</sup>Whereas General Oveissi had been both the Military Governor of Tehran and the Commander of the Iranian Army, the positions were separated to attempt to prevent the concentration of too much power in the hands of one individual.

<sup>61</sup>"Bakhtiar Says His Regime Faces Danger of a Coup," New York Times, January 11, 1979, p. 3.

against the deserters due to "fear of popular reaction and possible armed confrontation" among competing factions of the Iranian military.<sup>62</sup>

During this time, General Huyser was still conducting meetings with senior Iranian officials concerning the ramifications of a military coup. Huyser reported back to United States Secretary of Defense Harold Brown that working with the Iranian military was difficult due to the compartmentation of the services. The Shah's prohibition on coordination among the services for fear of a coup had left the military arms of the state incapable of joint action,<sup>63</sup> or any type of independent action. In this vein, U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance issued the following statement:

Iran's armed forces remain essential to the security and independence of Iran, and as a necessary complement to a legitimate civilian government. We have urged that everything be done to ensure their integrity and their support by the people of Iran.<sup>64</sup>

Bakhtiar was forced to appoint a new Minister of War, General Jaafar Shafaqat to replace General Djam. General Shafaqat was regarded as a moderate who favored civilian rule.

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<sup>62</sup>"Kuwaiti Daily Reports Iranian Officers Deserting," Paris AFP in English, FBIS, 1000 GMT, 11 Jan 79 (TA111016Y), January 11, 1979, p. R12.

<sup>63</sup>Sick, All Fall Down, p. 165.

<sup>64</sup>"Text of Vance's Statement on the Situation in Iran," New York Times, January 12, 1979, p. 6.

He replaced General Djam because the Shah would not allow General Djam to appoint the heads of the armed forces. Fearing a coup, the Shah also refused to allow the heads of the armed forces to report to General Djam. In light of these new developments, new speculation emerged concerning the possibilities of a military coup if the Shah did not give the military a freer hand in security affairs.<sup>65</sup>

From Paris, Ayatollah Khomeini stated that the Shah would stage a military coup rather than abdicate his power. The exiled opposition leader issued a call to the army to prevent any such attempts.<sup>66</sup>

There is a possibility that the treacherous Shah, now about to depart, will commit a further crime—a military coup d'état; I have frequently warned that this is probable. It would be his last blow. The courageous people of Iran know that there are only a few slavish and bloodthirsty individuals in the army, who apparently occupy important positions and whose identities are known to me, and that the honorable elements in the army will never permit these slaves of the Shah to commit such a crime against their nation and religion. In accordance with my God-given and national duty, I alert the Iranian army to this danger and I demand that all commanders and officers resolutely prevent the enactment of any such conspiracy and not permit a few bloodthirsty individuals to plunge the noble people of Iran into a bloodbath. Iranian army, this is your God-given duty. If you obey these congenital traitors, you will be accountable to God, Exalted and Almighty, condemned by all humanitarians, and cursed by future generations...The Iranian people must treat the honorable officers and commanders of the army

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<sup>65</sup>"Iran's New Chief Calls for Backing of Arabs, 'Especially Palestinians,'" New York Times, January 12, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>66</sup>"Iran's Exiled Moslem Leader Picks Council to Form a Religious State," New York Times, January 14, 1979, p. 1.

with respect. They must recognize that a few treacherous members of the army cannot sully the army as a whole. The record and responsibility of a few bloodthirsty individuals is something separate from the army as a whole. The army belongs to the people, and the people belong to the army. The army will not suffer any harm as a result of the departure of the Shah.<sup>67</sup>

The Shah attempted to ensure the loyalty of the military forces to Bakhtiar to prevent anarchy upon his departure but

There was, however, a flaw in his thinking: Iran's armed forces were basically the shah's creation and loyal to him, not to an abstract concept of "constitutional authority." Should the shah choose to remain in the country and fight for his survival, there was a good chance that the army, even though suffering from occasional desertions and the mullahs' antimonarchist brainwashing, would side with the ruler and defend him. But it was somewhat naive to expect that the army would defend an empty palace and meekly transfer its allegiance to a little known former opposition leader in the name of constitutional principle.<sup>68</sup>

For this reason, the armed forces lost all vestiges of discipline when the Shah left on February 11, 1979.<sup>69</sup> When he left Iran, the Shah refused to appoint a strong military leader such as General Djam to hold the armed forces together, fearing that such a situation would work against him if he returned to Iran.<sup>70</sup> He was incapable of transferring power

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<sup>67</sup>Imam Khomeini, Islam and Revolution, pp. 247-8.

<sup>68</sup>Lenczowski, American Presidents and the Middle East, p. 197.

<sup>69</sup>Richards and Waterbury, A Political Economy of the Middle East, p. 427.

<sup>70</sup>This is indicative of how out of touch with the reality of the situation the Shah really was.

from himself to the government."<sup>71</sup> In contradiction to Skocpol's theory, it "was only after the Shah's departure that the process of disintegration of the army under political pressure set in."<sup>72</sup>

Upon the Shah's departure, anti-Pahlavi demonstrators sought to win the favor of soldiers patrolling the streets of Tehran. The demonstrators kissed the soldiers and gave them flowers, in an attempt to emphasize their solidarity with them. In a return gesture, many of the soldiers placed the flowers in the barrels of their machine guns.<sup>73</sup>

Amidst the uncertainty, rumors circulated as to whether the military would attempt a coup or at least a crackdown. Iranian papers were especially critical of the armed forces; they criticized the military's role in keeping the Shah in power and killing hundreds of Iranians.<sup>74</sup>

Waiting to see how events were going to develop with the incoming regime, Iranian Armed Forces Chief of General Gharabaghi issued a warning to any potential officers who might be contemplating a coup, stating they would be

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<sup>71</sup>Arjomand, The Turban for the Crown, pp. 123-4.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 190.

<sup>73</sup>"Departure of Shah Won't Bring Peace, Opponent Predicts," New York Times, January 15, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>74</sup>Pace, "New Freedom Excites Iran Journalist," New York Times, January 15, 1979, p. 3.

"crushed." The General emphasized the need to avoid conflict between the armed forces and the anti-Shah factions in Iran. He stated that if any conflict occurred between them, "neither the army nor the nation will survive."<sup>75</sup> The General further stated that the Army would support "any legal government" but that the Army had been subject to "provocations" by demonstrators in various Iranian cities and issued a stern warning to anti-government forces not to "provoke" the army, whose duty was to maintain order.<sup>76</sup>

In a similar vein, Khomeini urged the nation to "preserve public order and win the support of the armed forces."<sup>77</sup> Paris' diplomatic community was surprised by the Ayatollah's moderate tone and his desire to include the armed forces in any discussions of a post-Pahlavi Iran.<sup>78</sup> What these diplomats ignored was the fact that Khomeini in fact desired to gain political control of the army to use it as a tool to assist in the transition from monarchy to Islamic Republic.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Gage, "Shah Said To Plan To Leave Iran Today For Egypt And U.S.," New York Times, January 16, 1979, pp. 1 - 8.

<sup>76</sup>"AFP: Army Chief Says No Military Coup," Paris AFP in English, FBIS, 1520 GMT, 15 Jan 79 (TA151530Y), January 16, 1979, p. R6.

<sup>77</sup>Lewis, Paul, "Ayatollah Urges Backers to Press Fight on Regime," New York Times, January 18, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid. p. 14.

<sup>79</sup>Owen, State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East, p. 217.

Ayatollah Shariatmadari also issued an appeal for calm, urging Iranians to "respect the Iranian Army and treat it with kindness and fraternity," distinguishing the majority of the soldiers from "those who have opened fire on the people," who "should be treated separately."<sup>80</sup>

In the oil producing city of Ahvaz, renegade soldiers opened fire on anti-Shah demonstrators, dashing any hopes of a completely peaceful transition to Bakhtiar's rule. Estimates of fatalities ranged from ten to over one hundred. The violence began when a military officer told his subordinates that the Shah had left Iran and that they must obey Prime Minister Bakhtiar. Three officers and an undetermined number of soldiers then took to the streets rolling their tanks over cars and shooting at peaceful demonstrators. They were contained within a few hours, but not before giving rise to speculation concerning a possible coup.<sup>81</sup>

In an attempt at damage control, the Governor General of Khuzestan, Lieutenant General Jafarian decried the "opportunists who want to plunge our dear country into anarchy." He also criticized the renegade military members whom he described as "adventurists" that would be punished "in

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<sup>80</sup>"Ayatollah Shari'at-Madari Warns Against Incitement," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1030 GMT, 17 Jan 79 (LD171358), January 18, 1979, p. R1.

<sup>81</sup>Apple, "Soldiers Run Wild In Iranian Oil City," New York Times, January 18, 1979, p. 1.



accordance with the law and regulations." He urged the army to obey Bakhtiar "so that a chasm--God forbid--may not be brought about between the army and the zealous, patriotic Iranian people."<sup>82</sup>

In a another bid to defuse the tension and keep the armed forces out of any controversial situations, Iranian Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Gharabaghi stated there would be no army coup, because the army was "the guardian of the constitution and the government," whose duty was to maintain public order. He also claimed that all military perpetrators of insubordination would be "severely punished."<sup>83</sup> The General then urged all soldiers to carry out their duties "with a firm resolve, with moral discipline and a spirit replete with patriotism and by overcoming emotionalism and refraining from any act that might be contrary to military commands and duties."<sup>84</sup>

Despite being reigned in, the army became the focus of public attention and a great deal of speculation concerning

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<sup>82</sup>"Khuzestan Governor General On Incidents in Ahvaz," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1630 GMT, 17 Jan 79 (LD171848), January 18, 1979, p. R2.

<sup>83</sup>"General Qarabaghi: There Will Be No Army Coup," Paris AFP in English, FBIS, 1144 GMT, 22 Jan 79 (OW221145), January 22, 1979, p. R6.

<sup>84</sup>"Qarabaghi Calls For Armed Forces Unity Behind Government," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 2030 GMT, 22 Jan 79 (LD222240), January 23, 1979, R1.

the possibilities of a coup. As the army generals expressed their support for Bakhtiar, supporters of Khomeini skeptically voiced their doubts about the army's intentions, especially in light of the Ayatollah's imminent return from exile in Paris. Ayatollah Mahmoud Taleghani warned that the people of Iran would wage a "holy war" against the army if it attempted a coup.<sup>85</sup> He stated that if the army tried to take over Iran, "the people would deal with" the military and would be "victorious."<sup>86</sup> These fears proved to be unfounded since the Army as a unified entity was incapable of acting without the Shah.<sup>87</sup>

The military's public image became more tenuous however when renegade soldiers opened fire on pro-Khomeini anti-government demonstrators in Tehran on January 26. Although Bakhtiar gave the orders to quell the unrest, which included over 100,000 demonstrators, the army, as the enforcement arm, took the brunt of public outcry against its actions, which resulted in at least 15 deaths and dozens wounded.<sup>88</sup> This served to further degrade the army's already tarnished public image.

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<sup>85</sup>Pace, "Iran Islamic Leader Warns Of Holy War If Army Tries Coup," New York Times, January 23, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>87</sup>Arjomand, The Turban for the Crown, p. 124.

<sup>88</sup>Pace, "Troops Kill at Least 15 in Tehran As 100,000 Protest for Khomeini," New York Times, January 27, 1979, p. 1.

Further violence occurred on January 29, when demonstrators protested the army's closing of all airports, which prevented the return of Khomeini. After being pelted with rocks, soldiers fired on crowds in Tehran, killing 35 and wounding an unknown number of civilians. Soldiers also fired on anti-government demonstrators in Resht, a town on the Caspian sea, killing five and wounding 40.<sup>89</sup>

Upon announcing that Iran's airports would reopen to allow Khomeini's return, army officers conferred with the Ayatollah's aides. Among other topics discussed were security plans to safeguard Khomeini.<sup>90</sup> A more telling sign of the military's political emasculation was the fact that revolutionaries, not the army, provided security for Khomeini when he returned to Iran.<sup>91</sup>

After Khomeini's return to Iran, he appealed to the Iranian military to become "free and independent" so that they could join with him as "brothers."<sup>92</sup> He then criticized the presence of American advisors in the armed forces as an impure element and entreated the army to follow the correct path

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<sup>89</sup>"Bakhtiar Peace Bid To Khomeini Fails; Violence Renewed," New York Times, January 29, 1979, p. 4.

<sup>90</sup>Apple, "Iran, Easing Return Of Khomeini, Is Set To Reopen Airports," New York Times, January 30, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>91</sup>Arjomand, The Turban and the Crown, p. 135.

<sup>92</sup>Markham, James M., "Ayatollah Steps Up Pressure On Regime To Bow Out In Iran," New York Times, February 4, 1979, p. 1.

I invite them for their own good and the nation's good to be with us. I hope they can be guided. The people are their brothers. We want what is good for them; we want them to be free and independent.<sup>93</sup>

Faced with the reality of the new regime, the military stated that its loyalties were to the Iranian Constitution, not the Shah. The Khomeini regime, in return, stated that their goal was a transfer of power within the framework of that same constitution.<sup>94</sup> By cooperating with the incoming regime, General Gharabaghi hoped to preserve the unity and structure of the armed forces, thereby maintaining cohesion to prevent disintegration and internal friction within the military. Gharabaghi also omitted the pledge of loyalty to the Shah which was administered on February 6 to cadets of the Tehran Military Academy upon graduation.<sup>95</sup>

The show of unity suffered a blow when a number of Iranian Air Force civilian technicians staging a pro-Khomeini demonstration at Farahabad Air Force base in Tehran were fired upon by soldiers. Conflicting reports of the February 10 confrontation put the death toll between 20 and 70.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>Ibid, p. 16.

<sup>94</sup>Markham, "2 Sides In Iran Take Conciliatory Steps; Contacts Reported," New York Times, February 5, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>95</sup>Arjomand, The Turban for the Crown, p. 123.

<sup>96</sup>Ibrahim, "Troops Said To Kill Khomeini's Backers At Iranian Air Base," New York Times, February 10, 1979, p. 1.

As a result of the Farahabad Air Force Base incident, violence spread throughout Tehran among factions within the military and armed civilians, causing many more casualties. The Imperial Guard, equipped with helicopters and tanks, found itself arrayed against the technicians, who were augmented by an increasing force of military officers, Air Force cadets, and civilians. A poorly planned offensive against the technicians failed to dislodge them and further weakened the military.<sup>97</sup> In retrospective, the Homafaran "were singly the most important unit in the armed forces won over by the revolutionaries and were decisive in precipitating the final split in the army that sealed its fate on February 9 to 11."<sup>98</sup>

The Homafaran were a particularly dissatisfied element within the armed forces. Although they were civilians, they wore military uniforms and possessed a military rank between the officers and NCO's.<sup>99</sup> They were hired on a contractual basis to perform maintenance and technical functions within the military. Although they were well paid, they were accorded very little respect within the military and were also

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<sup>97</sup>Ibrahim, "Scores Dead In Iran As Military Groups Clash Over Regime," New York Times, February 11, 1979, pp 1 & 3.

<sup>98</sup>Arjomand, The Turban for the Crown, p. 123.

<sup>99</sup>NCO is an acronym that stands for Non-Commissioned Officers; a type of enlisted personnel.

forced to stay in the military after their contracts had expired. This led to a great deal of discontent, owing to the fact that they could have made much more money working in the civilian sector.<sup>100</sup>

In an effort to contain the violence, the Iranian Army called its troops back into the barracks "to prevent further bloodshed and anarchy." as Prime Minister Bakhtiar resigned.<sup>101</sup> Additionally, General Gharabaghi declared that the armed forces were "neutral" in the political conflict in an attempt to keep them intact and prevent popular rage from being directed at them.<sup>102</sup>

After the Farahabad incident, speculation concerning the defeat of the Imperial Guard at the hands of "a mob of poorly armed civilians" began to circulate. Questions as to why a force in excess of 400,000 that was well-armed and well-trained abounded in Tehran during the early phases of the Revolution.<sup>103</sup> One Western military attache offered an analysis that seemed to state the obvious

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<sup>100</sup>Rubin, Paved With Good Intentions, p. 227.

<sup>101</sup>Gage, "Army Withdraws Its Support For Bakhtiar; Iranian Prime Minister Reported To Resign," New York Times, February 12, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>102</sup>Lewis, "Iran's Elite Army Guard Was Routed by Civilians," New York Times, February 13, 1979, p. 8.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

As a fighting force the army has been humiliated. As a political influence, its weight is greatly reduced.

It is a tragedy to see this happen to a force with such fine tradition, but I am not surprised. I think the Imperial Guard was wrongly trained and badly commanded. But in the end you cannot ask a modern army to fight its own people.<sup>104</sup>

Further comments by other military personnel also criticized the Shah for not training his military in riot control procedures or to learn to combat the psychological effects of repressing their own countrymen.<sup>105</sup> A more accurate criticism would have targeted the monarch's paranoid compartmentation of his military and the institutionalized inability to make independent decisions.

The Farahabad incident was the vital catalyst that allowed anti-Pahlavi factions to overcome the might of the armed forces. This was not due so much to any ability of the revolutionaries to resist the armed forces, but rather to (1) the synergistic effects of popular, broad-based opposition to the Shah, (2) reluctance of the soldiers to repress their fellow countrymen and military personnel, (3) institutional inertia, (4) the Shah's excessively paranoid compartmentation of his security forces in order to prevent their conspiring against him, and (5) the military's inability to act independently in response to a crisis situation.

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<sup>104</sup>Ibid.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid.

When the Army's decision to withdraw its support and retreat into the barracks was made public, the citizens of Tehran celebrated in the streets. They hailed the soldiers as they withdrew from the Iranian radio and television complex and threw flowers to them.<sup>106</sup>

Ayatollah Khomeini issued a statement praising the military's decision to withdraw from the fray and encouraged the populace to accord the military the proper courtesy and respect in keeping with their status as part of the revolution

Now that victory is near and that the armed forces have retreated and announced their lack of intervention in political affairs and also announced their support of the nation, you should not burn their institutions....

Again I say to you that if the army stops and joins the people and the legal Islamic government, then we will recognize them as being of the people.<sup>107</sup>

In a show of support for Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution, hundreds of Air Force warrant officer technicians and other personnel from Hatami Air Force Base in Esfahan marched in solidarity to proclaim their support for the Bazargan government.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup>Ibrahim, "Jubilation, Anarchy and Sadness Mix as Tehran Erupts in Frenzy," New York Times, February 12, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>107</sup>"Text of Ayatollah's Statement," New York Times, February 12, 1979, p. 8.

<sup>108</sup>"Hatami Airbase Supports Bazargan," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1630 GMT, 12 Feb 79 (LD121731), February 13, 1979, p. R7.



### C. THE PURGE OF THE MONARCHISTS

Almost immediately, leading military figures were publicly displayed by the new regime in what was to become a string of summary executions that took place in "an atmosphere of arbitrariness and lack of control."<sup>109</sup> This psychological "reign of terror" was intended to send a clear message to the military to submit to the new regime.<sup>110</sup> In Tehran, three generals were paraded in front of foreign journalists as "some of the honorable thieves who have ruled this country for the last 10 years."<sup>111</sup> The new leadership had in fact decided that a "purge of the armed forces would be undertaken, but on a limited scale, concentrating on 'corrupt elements.'"<sup>112</sup>

Provisional Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan quickly appointed Major General Muhammad Vali Gharavi as the Chief of the Supreme Commander's Staff, in the first of what were to be many military personnel replacements carried out by the new

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<sup>109</sup>Cottam, Iran and the United States, p. 192.

<sup>110</sup>Schahgaldian, Nikola B., The Iranian Military Under the Islamic Republic (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, 1987), p. 27.

<sup>111</sup>Ibrahim, "Some Leaders of Shah's Regime Are Put on Display as Prisoners," New York Times, February 13, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>112</sup>Kechichian and Sadri, 'National Security,' Metz, ed., Iran, p. 247.

regime.<sup>113</sup> Bazargan also appointed Lieutenant General Sa'id Mehdiyun as Commander of the Iranian Air Force. When announcing General Mehdiyun's appointment, all Air Force personnel, to include "officers, warrant officer technicians, NCO's, administrative staff and enlisted men," were ordered to report for duty on the following day to their units.<sup>114</sup> By doing so, the new regime ensured that the military were not only present and accounted for,<sup>115</sup> they could also be employed against any potential dissident elements. Air Force Brigadier General Ayatollah Mahagheqi, the Commander of the Air Force Fighters was arrested. There was no reason immediately given.<sup>116</sup>

On February 13, Major General Gharavi, Chief of the General Staff, issued an order to all the senior officers of the staff command to report immediately to Staff Command Headquarters for a conference. The urgency of the order was emphasized by the proviso that the officers were allowed to come in civilian

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<sup>113</sup>"New Chief of Supreme Staff," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1245 GMT, 12 Feb 79 (LD121258), February 13, 1979, p. R3.

<sup>114</sup>"New Air Force Commander," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1705 GMT, 12 Feb 79 (LD121736), February 13, 1979, p. R7.

<sup>115</sup>Those who did not report for duty could also be identified as possible subversives.

<sup>116</sup>"Air Force General Arrested," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 0630 GMT, 13 Feb 79 (LD130658), February 13, 1979, p. R10.

clothes if necessary.<sup>117</sup> Additionally, all officers, staff, and soldier of the Army's Staff Command were ordered to report for duty to their respective sections to "discharge their duties" for the following day.<sup>118</sup>

On the same day, an order was issued from Prime Minister Bazargan for all "officers, servicemen and employees of the War Ministry and its related organizations" to report for duty and "resume work immediately after receiving this message."<sup>119</sup> Simultaneously, Colonel Tavakkoli, Head of the Provisional Islamic Revolution Staff Command, issued the following directive to all members of the armed forces

Since all the units of the armed forces have accepted the leadership of His Eminence Imam Khomeyni, the leader of the revolution, all the units that have started moving toward Tehran in order to assist the units in the capital are hereby informed to immediately return to their barracks and report the whereabouts of all units in the relevant garrisons to the provisional revolution staff command. People who are on the route of these units are asked not to obstruct their movement.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>117</sup>This may have been a safety precaution as well in light of the anti-military sentiment prevalent among certain elements of the population.

<sup>118</sup>"Senior Army Officers To Headquarters," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 0830 GMT, 13 Feb 79 (LD130858), February 13, 1979, p. R11.

<sup>119</sup>"Military Personnel To Resume Duties," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 0840 GMT, 13 Feb 79 (LD130938), February 13, 1979, p. R11.

<sup>120</sup>"Units Ordered To Barracks," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 0930 GMT, 13 Feb 79 (LD131028), February 13, 1979, p. R11.

On the same day, Khomeini addressed the Iranian populace, stressing that the army, as well as the police and gendarmerie should not be attacked because they "have returned to us, and are one of us." The Ayatollah also stated that the "army is ours," appealing not only to those elements of society who harbored anti-military sentiment, but also to the military itself.<sup>121</sup>

Deputy Prime Minister Amir Entezam issued a statement that the 487,000 man Iranian Army was "dissolved, unfortunately." He then went on to proclaim that he entertained hopes of improving the state of affairs for the military to "put it back together again."<sup>122</sup> This sentiment was echoed by Prime Minister Medhi Bazargan, who stated the desire to rapidly rebuild the fragmented military with the same organizational hierarchy and a distinct command hierarchy of new, appointed officers,<sup>123</sup> cast in the mold of the nascent Islamic Republic.

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<sup>121</sup>"Khomeyni Addresses Nation," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1701 GMT, 13 Feb 79 (LD132038), February 14, 1979, p. R8.

<sup>122</sup>Markham, "Iran Regime Is Expected To Insist in Total Power," New York Times, February 14, 1979, p. 8.

<sup>123</sup>Markham, "Marxist-Leninist Guerilla Group Is a Potent Force in New Iran," New York Times, February 15, 1979, p. 18. Although these statements seemed to indicate that the military had dissolved, its basic structure remained intact, as evidenced by the return of the soldiers to their barracks and duty stations when ordered. The real crisis was one of leadership and knowing who was in charge.

In an attempt to keep the armed forces under government control, Major General Qarani, Chief of Staff of the National Army issued a directive for all members of the Army, Police, and Gendarmerie to return to their duty stations as quickly as possible. Appealing to those service members who had deserted to fight against the Shah, he stated that the "dereliction of duty has been forgiven" since they "deserted their barracks at the command of the imam."<sup>124</sup> Simultaneously, all Air Force personnel were recalled to their duty stations to "maintain order in Tehran." All returning members were also instructed to bring in any weapons they might possess in order to prevent "unidentified individuals" from obtaining them.<sup>125</sup>

General Manucher Khasrodad, the Army Airborne Division Commander, was arrested on February 13 attempting to flee Iran. As a loyal supporter of the Shah, he was placed in detention for future deliberations.<sup>126</sup> On February 15, four generals, among them the former head of the Savak and General Khasrodad, were executed by a firing squad in "accordance with

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<sup>125</sup>"Air Force Personnel Recalled," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1835 GMT, 15 Feb 79 (LD151900), February 16, 1979, p. R5.

<sup>126</sup>Ibrahim, "Iran's New Premier Names 7 To Cabinet; Khomeini Asks Calm," New York Times, February 14, 1979, p. 10.

Islamic standards and prescriptions"<sup>127</sup> in Tehran.<sup>128</sup> The state radio proclaimed to "have executed the executioners of the previous regime" in order to "purify the blood of the revolution and to put new blood of the revolution into circulation."<sup>129</sup> The radio broadcast also stated that 20 other high-ranking officers of the Pahlavi Regime would face a trial by revolutionary tribunal, followed by death sentences.<sup>130</sup>

A new arm of the military consisting of Islamic law enforcement officials was announced as an integral part of the military. Their presence was explained as necessary to "give the utmost assistance" as "spiritual representatives" to the armed forces.<sup>131</sup> This was necessary due to the fact that "there simply was not a core of pro-Khomeini military personnel who could displace the discredited and mistrusted Imperial officer corps" and as a result, "the full fury of the

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<sup>127</sup>"Four Generals Executed," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 0619 GMT, 16 Feb 79 (LD160932), February 16, 1979, p. R10.

<sup>128</sup>"Secret Police Head And 3 Others In Iran Said To Be Executed," New York Times, February 16, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>129</sup>Markham, "20 More Shah Aides Said To Face Death In Start Of A Purge," New York Times, February 17, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid.

<sup>131</sup>"Islamic Law Enforcement Officials," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 0830 GMT, 16 Feb 79 (LD161008), February 16, 1979, p. R11.

revolutionary leaders were turned on the top commanders of the Imperial armed forces promptly after the triumph of the revolution."<sup>132</sup>

In a message to the populace, Ayatollah Khomeini's "Propaganda Committee" issued a statement explaining the ongoing purge of the armed forces

The purging of the armed organizations affiliated with the former diabolical regime is among the top priorities of the new government. It has top priority in the Revolution Committee appointed by Imam Khomeyni....all the unreliable and mercenary cadres whose loyalty to the antipopular front has been proved shall be replaced by revolutionary and popular Muslim cadres.<sup>133</sup>

On February 17, General Qarani, Chief of Staff of the National Army of Iran, dissolved the Imperial Guard and the Immortal Guards. He directed that all former members of the defunct organizations place themselves at the disposal of the Army.<sup>134</sup> On the same day, 26 Air Force generals and four Air Force colonels were retired<sup>135</sup> and two military officers were

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<sup>132</sup>Zabih, Sepehr, The Iranian Military in Revolution and War (New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 116.

<sup>133</sup>"Propaganda Committee Issues Statement," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1630 GMT, 16 Feb 79 (LD161905), February 21, 1979, p. R2.

<sup>134</sup>"Imperial, Javidan Guard Dissolved," Tehran Domestic Service, in Persian, FBIS, 1022 GMT, 17 Feb 79 (LD171203), February 21, 1979, p. R5.

<sup>135</sup>"Air Force Officers Retired," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1230 GMT, 17 Feb 79 (LD171348), February 21, 1979, p. R6.

arrested and handed over to the revolutionary committee.<sup>136</sup>

In the wake of the Air Force retirements, a new Air Force Commander, Brigadier General Kiumars Saqafi, was appointed by General Qarani.<sup>137</sup> On February 18, 41 generals and admirals were retired, including former Prime Minister (General) Gholamreza Azhari.<sup>138</sup>

The arrests continued on February 18, with the government announcing the seizure of an undisclosed number of military officers in Tehran and other parts of the country.<sup>139</sup> On February 19, the government announced that four more generals had been executed by firing squad in Tehran.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>136</sup>"Two Mashhad Officers Arrested," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1530 GMT, 17 Feb 79 (LD171749), February 21, 1979 p. R7.

<sup>137</sup>"New Air Force Commander," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1930 GMT, 17 Feb 79 (LD172101), February 21, 1979, p. R8.

<sup>138</sup>"Azhari, Other Officers Retired," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1030 GMT, 18 Feb 79 (LD181131), February 21, 1979, p. R10 and "Seven More Generals Retired," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1630 GMT, 18 Feb 79 (LD181830), February 21, 1979, p. R11.

<sup>139</sup>"More Top Officials Arrested in Iran," New York Times, February 19, 1979, p. 6.

<sup>140</sup>"Iran Reports 4 More Officers Dead, Executed by Order of Islamic Court," New York Times, February 20, 1979, p. 1.



On February 19, 25 more officers, including a number of generals and admirals, were retired from service.<sup>141</sup> At the same time, seven officers in Orumiyeh were arrested and given over to the Islamic Revolutionary Council.<sup>142</sup>

In the midst of the confusion generated by the rapid changes in the social fabric of Iran and in the wake of a rash of military executions, the Iranian military began to show signs of stress and disorientation. Dissent and crumbling discipline became apparent as soldiers began to veto the appointments of senior commanders, disobey orders, and demand the replacement of certain officers suspected of being Savak collaborators.<sup>143</sup> Although the military's basic structure remained intact, the crisis within the ranks was due to a leadership vacuum. An observer noted the "disintegration of authority in the army,"<sup>144</sup> that was indicative of the ambitions of junior officers who coveted positions held by senior officers perceived to be vulnerable to the ongoing purges.

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<sup>141</sup>"Additional Officers Retired," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1030 GMT, 19 Feb 79 (LD191122), February 21, 1979, p. R18.

<sup>142</sup>"Arrests of Orumiyeh Military," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1630 GMT, 19 Feb 79 (LD191940), February 21, 1979, p. R18.

<sup>143</sup>Ibrahim, "Army Is Paralyzed by Dissent," New York Times, February 20, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid.

On February 20, 20 more generals were retired.<sup>145</sup> At the same time, four more generals were executed by Ayatollah Khomeini's Revolutionary Committee firing squad in Tehran. Prime Minister Bazargan expressed his surprise at not being informed beforehand of the execution.<sup>146</sup>

On the same day, Iranian Army Chief of Staff General Qarani announced that more troops were returning to their barracks and duty stations. He also stated that the purges of the military would continue to remove all senior officers accused of collaboration with the Pahlavi regime. He claimed that the presence of these generals weakened the discipline of the army since the soldiers refused to obey their orders and that Iran "cannot afford to have a weak army."<sup>147</sup>

General Qarani also spoke of the challenges facing the armed forces and correctly explained some of the factors that had contributed to the army's poor performance during the Islamic Revolution

Our problem concerns the fear, insecurity and humiliation felt by the army cadre. The necessary reconciliation between the army and the people has not been achieved yet, and this very element has been the cause of our lesser success with the capital's cadre. Basically, the army is

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<sup>145</sup>"Officers Pensioned Off," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 0815 GMT, 20 Feb 79 (LD201052), February 21, 1979, p. R6.

<sup>146</sup>Ibrahim, "Iranian Premier's Office Expresses Surprise Over 4 Latest Executions," New York Times, February 21, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid, p. 3.

not intended for maintaining domestic order: It is equipped to safeguard and protect the country's borders against foreign enemies. Our main program concerns organizing a national Islamic army that can pursue the ideology of a noble government with the progressive Shi'ite principles, and for this reason we want to build an army with a national character and Islamic principles. Therefore, we need the kind of personnel who are able to fulfill this critical task and who have no bad records of past misdeeds. In pursuit of this program all the generals and lieutenant generals and a number of major generals and brigadier generals have been retired and half the Imperial Guard NCO's have asked to be retired.

At any rate, with the extensive purge in the army...many of the problems will be resolved.<sup>148</sup>

On February 21, 16 more generals were retired<sup>149</sup> while four military officers were arrested and incarcerated in Shiraz.<sup>150</sup> At the same time, six officers were appointed to new positions of military command within the regime,<sup>151</sup> which helped to reconstruct the command hierarchy with officers possessing minimal ties to the monarchy.

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<sup>148</sup>"Qarani on Army's Disintegration," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1030 GMT, 20 Feb 79 (LD201220), February 21, 1979, p. R22.

<sup>149</sup>"16 Generals, Brigadiers Retired," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 0701 GMT, 21 Feb 79 (LD211123), February 21, 1979, p. R31.

<sup>150</sup>"More Officers Arrested," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1830 GMT, 21 Feb 79 (LD211952), February 22, 1979, p. R3.

<sup>151</sup>"Army Appointments," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1630 GMT, 21 Feb 79 (LD212110), February 22, 1979, p. R3 and "Armor Center Commander Appointed," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1630 GMT, 21 Feb 79 (LD212111), February 22, 1979, p. R4.

The retirements continued on February 24 when 32 major generals were removed from active service.<sup>152</sup> The retirements were followed on February 25 by the appointment of ten officers to new command positions and eleven military lawyers to new posts.<sup>153</sup> Ten colonels were also retired on February 26.<sup>154</sup>

The Iranian Islamic Army announced on March 1 that 71 officers had been retired and that 71 more would be retired in two days. The rationale for retiring the 142 officers was to "organize the National Islamic Army's dimensions and make more use of young people."<sup>155</sup>

Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Ibrahim Yazdi spoke to the press about the armed forces on March 3. He dismissed notions that the army would be disbanded although he did say that there would be some organizational and hierarchical changes

We must preserve the army in its present form, and at the same time launch a series of programs aimed at staging a cultural revolution within the army. Furthermore, we must

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<sup>152</sup>"More Army Generals Retired," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 2030 GMT, 24 Feb 79 ((LD242150), February 26, 1979, p. R13.

<sup>153</sup>"Army Appointments," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 0830 GMT, 25 Feb 79 (LD251002), February 26, 1979, pp. R14-15 and "Judicial Army Officers," Tehran Domestic Service, in Persian, FBIS, 0830 GMT, 25 Feb 79 (LD251006), February 26, 1979, p. R15.

<sup>154</sup>"Retired Colonels," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1230 GMT, 26 Feb 79 (LD261311), February 27, 1979, p. R2.

<sup>155</sup>"Army Officers Retired," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 2030 GMT, 01 Mar 79 (LD012232), March 2, 1979, p. R13.

purge the army of the value held under the monarch, so that we might be able to create an ideal army for the Islamic government.

Of course, there are those in the army who will resist such changes.

These individuals will be removed....They shall be removed and, if necessary, put on trial.<sup>156</sup>

On March 4, 13 generals and colonels were retired from active service,<sup>157</sup> followed by 33 Brigadier Generals the next day.<sup>158</sup> On March 5, seven generals were executed at Tehran's Qasr prison after being charged with torture and killing under the Pahlavi Regime.<sup>159</sup>

In Abadan on March 6, two soldiers from the military garrison at Abadan were publicly displayed and confronted by a crowd, who accused them of having shot at and arrested demonstrators during a protest that took place the previous December. The two soldiers were also accused of torturing some of the persons whom they had arrested, to include pouring

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<sup>156</sup>"Yazdi Interview," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1710 GMT, 03 Mar 79 (LD032040), March 5, 1979, pp. R14-15.

<sup>157</sup>"Officers' Retirement," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1030 GMT, 06 Mar 79 (LD061402), March 7, 1979, p. R1.

<sup>158</sup>"Retired Gendarmerie Commanders," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1030 GMT, 05 Mar 79 (LD051230), March 6, 1979, p. R1.

<sup>159</sup>Kifner, John, "Islam's Law in Iran, With Death to the Transgressor," New York Times, March 7, 1979, p. 8.

acid over the genitals of male prisoners. The soldiers were then sentenced to death.<sup>160</sup>

On March 9, three persons, one of them a lieutenant general, were executed for (among other things) "Corruption on earth," and "Combatting God, the apostle of God,"<sup>161</sup> and the imam of the era."<sup>162</sup> This incident was followed on March 12 by the execution of 11 more military personnel, to include at least one general.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>160</sup>Ibrahim, "Iranian Komiteh Has Final Say Over Oranges, Brothels and Life," New York Times, March 8, 1979, pp. 1 & 10.

<sup>161</sup>Actually, many of the military personnel executed were charged with being "corrupt on the earth" and "warring against God." These two phrases became standard justifications for carrying out executions. Dr. Ibrahim Yazdi, the Deputy Prime Minister for Revolutionary Affairs, explained that the two charges had to "be understood in the Islamic cultural context," which was "a union of church and state in which law is essentially religious law," (the Sharia), which was derived from the Quran, the teachings of Muhammad, and the work of religious legal scholars. Yazdi commented that although the charge of "corruption on earth" was a serious one, it was difficult to explain, although it did mean "endangering the life of the nation." Joseph Schachf, a scholar on Islamic law, stated that every political theory in Islam began "with the assumption that Islamic government existed by virtue of a divine contract based on the Sharia." Under those circumstances, political science was not an independent discipline (as in the West), but rather a part of theology to the extent that there was "no distinction between state and society or between church and state." All data in this footnote from Kifner, "Iranian Official Explains Trials and Their Suspension," New York Times, March 18, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>162</sup>"Execution Of Three Officers," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 0430 GMT, 09 Mar 79 (LD091115), March 9, 1979, p. R5.

<sup>163</sup>"More Executions," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 0530 GMT, 13 Mar 79 (LD131024), March 13, 1979, p. R8.

On March 16 Ayatollah Khomeini ordered a cessation of the closed trials and summary executions. He stated that from that moment on, all trials would have to take place under the direct supervision of the Islamic Revolutionary Council acting under the authority of the Islamic Government.<sup>164</sup>

On March 17, Dr. Ibrahim Yazdi cited the fears of a military coup as "the most important reason for the first round of executions." He went on to further justify the violence

This is a war, this is a revolution....We had to show that we mean business.

Now we are in control....Now we can afford to wait. Now we can have trials.<sup>165</sup>

Yazdi also stated that the Shah had fallen so quickly that the incoming regime had not had a great deal of time to prepare to govern Iran or construct a legal system,<sup>166</sup> much less construct a new organizational hierarchy for the armed forces.

At a press conference on April 3, Entezam commented that the Islamic Republic would not inhibit the retirement of senior officers from the military and would even encourage it in some instances

army officers from the rank of brigadier general on up will retire. If there should be a need for the expertise

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<sup>164</sup>Jaynes, Gregory, "Ayatollah Orders Halt To Executions And Closed Trials," New York Times, March 17, 1979, pp. 1 & 3.

<sup>165</sup>Kifner, "Iranian Official Explains Trials and Their Suspension," New York Times, March 18, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>166</sup>Ibid.

of some for them in restructuring the army, they might possibly be invited to serve again.<sup>167</sup>

On April 6, three soldiers were executed in Isfahan in the first executions after a three week hiatus. On April 7, six soldiers were executed in Tehran following a 15 hour trial. They were condemned for their roles in the unrest of the preceding December in which the armed forces shot into demonstrating crowds from helicopter gunships. Prime Minister Bazargan protested the executions to Ayatollah Khomeini, to no avail. In the end, Bazargan had to resign himself to the resumption of the summary trials and executions of soldiers tainted by association with the monarchy.<sup>168</sup>

Two generals were sentenced to death by secret trial and executed by the revolutionary authorities on April 9. One of them, General Amir Hussein Rabii, was the former Iranian Air Force Commander. To no avail, Rabii criticized the Shah during his trial, stating "I realized what a hollow man I was working for when Americans such as Huyser could lead him out of the country by the nose."<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>167</sup>"Spokesman Comments On Retirement Of Generals, Khuzestan," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1030 GMT, 03 Apr 79 (LD031312), April 4, 1979, p. R7.

<sup>168</sup>Ibrahim, "Hoveida Believed Doomed in Iran; 6 More Die in Renewed Executions," New York Times, April 7, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>169</sup>Ibrahim, "Tehran Announces 4 More Executions," New York Times, April 9, 1979, p. 1.



On April 11, five more generals were executed after being condemned in a secret trial. They were charged with being "corrupt on earth" and "warring against God."<sup>170</sup> The generals were believed to be among the most senior officials of the Pahlavi regime and included the former Chief of the Immortals (the Shah's elite guards) and a former head of the Second Department, a military intelligence organization.<sup>171</sup>

More executions followed on April 14 as three soldiers faced a firing squad for their roles in supporting the ancien regime. In the wake of these executions, the New York-based International League for Human Rights requested that the Islamic Republic review its trial procedures and stop the executions. The League's president wryly commented that it was "no advance for human rights to have the abuses of the Shah replaced by abuses of revolutionary tribunals."<sup>172</sup>

Ayatollah Khomeini, addressing soldiers in their barracks in Qom on April 15, spoke of the transformation of the Army since the Islamic Revolution

Our army today is not the satanic army but a Mohammedan army, you soldiers should protect the army. You should listen to your superiors. Expel those who cause sedition

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<sup>170</sup>Kifner, "Iranian Official Explains Trials and Their Suspension," New York Times, March 18, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>171</sup>Kifner, "Tehran Executes 11 Top Officials," New York Times, April 11, 1979, p. 9.

<sup>172</sup>"Iran Executes More Former Officials," New York Times, April 14, 1979, p. 6.

among you from your midst: The protection of the country depends on the existence of order in the army. We are your supporters and you are our supporters and the nation is the supporter of all.<sup>173</sup>

The Army's name was changed on April 16 to the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The name change was attributed to Ayatollah Khomeini by government sources to remind the nation that the army was "an inseparable part of this revolution" who would fulfill "its great mission of safeguarding the gains of the Islamic Revolution within the context of its duties."<sup>174</sup>

On the following day, Major General Naser Farbod, the Chief of the General Staff of the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran, spoke of the changes taking place in the Army as an example of the societal innovations occurring within Iran

the army, like other sectors of the community, is also being reestablished on the basis of the life-giving school of Islam.

The transformation in the status of the army, which began with the end of the fallen imperial order in the form of joining the ranks of the people's struggle and resisting bloodthirsty rulers, was pursued by purging itself of antipeople elements. The greatest effort in the appointment of new commanders and senior officers was made so that the assignment of posts and positions is based only on competence and piety. For in our view, attaining rank and office is not a privilege but a heavy

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<sup>173</sup>"Khomeyni Addresses Soldiers At Farahabad, Lashkarak Barracks," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1630 GMT, 15 Apr 79 (LD151940), April 16, 1979, p. R11.

<sup>174</sup>"General Staff Command Announces New Army Name," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1030 GMT, 16 Apr 79 (LD161454), April 17, 1979, p. R1.

responsibility in the safeguarding and fulfillment of the popular mission of the army.<sup>175</sup>

On April 18, six soldiers of the ancien regime were executed for their actions against anti-Pahlavi demonstrators.<sup>176</sup> The soldiers were sentenced for "waging war against God, God's messenger, the people of Iran and the imam's representative; for sowing corruption on the earth, and effective and direct participation in killing and massacring the struggling people of Tehran and Iran."<sup>177</sup>

These executions took place on "Islamic Republic Armed Forces Day," which was proclaimed by Khomeini as a day for the armed forces to "demonstrate with their uniforms and their arms for the Islamic Republic."<sup>178</sup> Khomeini stated that the people of Iran were "duty bound to show their respect for the Islamic Army and show brotherly respect toward it" now that the Army

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<sup>175</sup>"Army Chief Discusses Support For Republic," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1030 GMT, 17 Apr 79 (LD171316), April 19, 1979, p. R6.

<sup>176</sup>"Seven More Executions Announced," New York Times, April 18, 1979, p. 12.

<sup>177</sup>"Former Members Of Eternal Guard Executed," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 0330 GMT, 18 Apr 79 (LD180900), April 18, 1979, p. R11.

<sup>178</sup>Ibrahim, "2 Iranian Leaders Make Sharp Attack On Khomeini Units," New York Times, April 18, 1979, p. 12.

was at "the service of the people and Islam." Khomeini also said that opposition for the Army was "unseemly."<sup>179</sup>

The demonstration fell short of Khomeini's expectations, although thousands of people came to see the event. Helicopters and aircraft flew overhead while a few platoons of Army and Air Force personnel paraded through Tehran. The small number of military participants was contrasted unfavorably to the grand scale of the pomp and circumstance parades of the Shah and "demonstrated the drastic decline of Iran's once mighty force of 450,000 members."<sup>180</sup>

The former Deputy Chief of the Khorramshahr Military District was sentenced to death and executed on April 20. The Islamic Revolutionary Court sentenced him with "massacring the people of this city during the Islamic movement of Iran."<sup>181</sup> There were three more executions on April 21, including a general and a colonel who were identified as "corrupt individuals."<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>179</sup>"Army Day Activities," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1630 GMT, 16 Apr 79 (LD161829), April 17, 1979, p. R2.

<sup>180</sup>"2 Ayatollahs Meet in Bid to Settle Their Growing Political Disputes," New York Times, April 19, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>181</sup>"Former Khorramshahr Military Official Executed," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1630 GMT, 20 Apr 79 (LD201748), April 23, 1979, p. R12.

<sup>182</sup>"Iran Protesters Condemn Khomeini's Committees," New York Times, April 21, 1979, p. 7.

The Iranian Army was dealt a further blow when three unidentified gunmen shot and killed General Vali Ullah Gharani, who was appointed by Khomeini as the Army Chief of Staff after the Islamic Revolution. He had later resigned after controversy regarding his heavy-handed use of force in suppressing rebellious Kurds. Iranian Government officials stated that the Army would be demoralized by the General's death after undergoing internal strife and collapse during the Revolution.<sup>183</sup>

Acting Foreign Minister Ibrahim Yazdi proclaimed on May 3 that the Iranian Government intended to reduce the size of the military from 500,000 soldiers to half that number. He stated the reductions would occur over the coming two months.<sup>184</sup>

In early May, Ayatollah Khomeini and the clerics announced the formation of a new, independent military force to serve as a counterweight<sup>185</sup> to the Army that would be "the key to neutralization of future challenges from the armed personnel and thus to perpetuation of their rule".<sup>186</sup> This new element was called the Pasdarans (Guardians) and eventually came to be

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<sup>183</sup>Ibrahim, "First Iran Army Chief In Khomeini's Regime Is Slain by 3 Gunmen," New York Times, April 24, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>184</sup>"Yazdi Says Armed Forces To Be Cut By Half," Manama Gulf News Agency in Arabic, FBIS, 1045 GMT, 03 May 79 (JN031117), May 4, 1979, p. R1.

<sup>185</sup>Hickman, Ravaged and Reborn, p. 1.

<sup>186</sup>Arjomand, The Urban for the Crown, p. 165.

known as the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (Revolutionary Guards). The Pasadaran was responsible to the religious authorities and operated outside of and parallel to the established military structure.<sup>187</sup>

Brigadier General Fazlollah Nazemi, the former Commander of the Security Guard, was tried and executed on May 7. He was charged with "collaboration with the previous regime...sowing corruption on earth and waging war against God."<sup>188</sup>

On May 8, three military officers (a general and two colonels) were among 21 persons executed by firing squad after death sentences were handed down by the Revolutionary Courts. The charge against them was "corruption on the earth," "warring with God and his emissaries," and "contempt toward the imam"<sup>189</sup> as a result of their roles in suppressing anti-Pahlavi demonstrations. The executions took place amidst rumors that the revolutionary authorities were considering a general amnesty for lower ranking officials of the Pahlavi

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<sup>187</sup>Kifner, "Khomeini Organizes A New Armed Force," New York Times, May 7, 1979, pp. 1 & 3.

<sup>188</sup>"Former Security Guard Commander Tried, Executed," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1630 GMT, 07 May 79 (LD071756), May 8, 1979, pp. R6-7.

<sup>189</sup>"21 Former Officials Executed 8 May," Tehran Domestic Service, in Persian, FBIS, 0430 GMT (LD080928), May 8, 1979, p. R1.

Regime who were not directly responsible for torture or death.<sup>190</sup>

On May 10, Chief of the General Staff Major General Naser Farbod spoke to the media concerning the Army, stating that during the Revolution, the Army was "in no way defeated, but it decided to submit to the will of the nation." While stating that the Army was well-armed, he admitted that "army morale has not returned to its desired state." He also claimed that the creation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps would strengthen the Army, while continuing the "revolutionary spirit" as it combatted "anti-revolutionary elements."<sup>191</sup>

In a later interview, Major General Farbod stressed the Islamic nature of the Army. In this context, the Army belonged to the nation and was an integral part of it, which included enjoying the freedom brought to Iran by the Islamic Revolution. This freedom "even spread into the army barracks."<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>190</sup>Kifner, "Tehran Executes 21, Including 3 Officials In Shah's Government," New York Times, May 8, 1979, p. 14.

<sup>191</sup>"Chief Of General Staff Speaks To Media About Army," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1630 GMT, 10 May 79 (LD101848), May 11, 1979, pp. R2-3.

<sup>192</sup>"Army Chief Interviewed On Army's Status, Future," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1710 GMT, 26 May 79 (LD262032), May 29, 1979, pp. R11-12.

On May 26, a military officer with ties to the ancien regime who had commanded a national defense artillery battalion was sentenced to death and executed for participation in a "massacre" against anti-Pahlavi demonstrators.<sup>193</sup> On May 29, five more soldiers were executed for their participation in suppressing anti-Shah demonstrations.<sup>194</sup>

The executions continued with the deaths of four more military personnel in Mashhad on May 30. All of the "criminals" were condemned for "slaying and wounding...innocent" Muslims during an anti-Pahlavi demonstration (the highest ranking soldier, a colonel, was additionally charged with "using maximum firepower and the utmost severity").<sup>195</sup> Three soldiers were also executed in Qazvin on May 30 on similar charges to those brought against the Mashhad soldiers.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>193</sup>"Former Commander Sentenced," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1930 GMT, 26 May 79 (LD262125), May 29, 1979, p. R13.

<sup>194</sup>"More Officers Executed," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 0430 GMT, 29 May 79 (LD290852), May 29, 1979, p. R14.

<sup>195</sup>"Four Mashhad Military Men Executed," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 0430 GMT, 30 May 79 (LD301028), May 31, 1979, p. R12.

<sup>196</sup>"Qazvin Court Sentences Three To Death," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1930 GMT, 30 May 79 (LD302256), May 31, 1979, p. R12.



In an attempt to further define the role of the Army, Major General Farbod, Chief of the General Staff of the Islamic Republican Army, spoke on June 3 to a group of military personnel in Tehran. He stated that "in order to safeguard the revolution, the revolutionary people and the Guardians of the Revolution should be used as much as possible, for we have done nothing for the revolution." He then commented that the Army's role was to safeguard Iran's borders. An NCO then stated that if military personnel were being tried and executed for killing demonstrators, how could they be assured that they would not later be tried and executed like the soldiers of the Pahlavi Regime if they suppressed the ethnic unrest occurring throughout Iran? General Farbod replied

The situation is now different from the past. You are now moving in the direction of the wishes of the majority of the people. You are carrying out the decision of a government that had been elected by the people.<sup>197</sup>

On June 5, the Islamic Revolutionary Court of Tehran announced that a colonel had been found guilty of "sowing corruption on earth" and waging "war against God" as a result of suppressing an anti-Pahlavi demonstration. He was executed. A major who worked for the colonel, was also

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<sup>197</sup>"Army Chief Interviewed On Role Of Army," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1610 GMT, 03 Jun 79 (LD032054), June 5, 1979, pp. R4-5.

convicted by the court but was sentenced to 12 years in prison.<sup>198</sup>

The Iranian Defense Ministry issued an order on June 21 banning all military personnel from making statements to the media. The order stated that many uninformed persons had made statements that contradicted the "country's supreme interests." The Defense Ministry announced that an authorized spokesman would from that moment on offer official pronouncements.<sup>199</sup>

In late June, the lack of discipline within the armed forces had reached such a state that the newspapers and radio broadcasts discussed the many examples of insubordination on a daily basis. In one instance, a squadron of fighter pilots refused to fly their warplanes to a troubled region and openly questioned the Government's decision to suppress unrest. In another case, Navy sailors refused to perform manual labor until joined by the officers, stating "we're all equal now."

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<sup>198</sup>"Tehran Court Sentences Colonel," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1930 GMT, 05 Jun 79 (LD052254), June 7, 1979, pp. R6-7.

<sup>199</sup>"INA: Military Banned From Making Statements To Media," Baghdad INA in Arabic, FBIS, 1652 GMT, 21 Jun 79 (JN211657), June 22, 1979, P. R27. This move was similar to United States military practices that designate a Public Affairs officer or spokesperson to hold press conferences and give official pronouncements. Any statement or press conference not approved through official channels (to include Public Affairs) is not sanctioned and therefore liable to administrative or judicial punishment.

Other examples included soldiers refusing to quell domestic unrest for fear of later being charged with repression.<sup>200</sup>

In a departure from past policies, the Revolutionary Council announced on July 3 that, effective July 10, all members of Iran's armed and security forces would be granted amnesty except for instances of murder or torture. After the implementation of the new policy, any unsubstantiated complaints of murder or torture would result in a prison term of up to two years. A Revolutionary Council spokesman stated that the amnesty was essential to allow the armed and security forces to fulfill their duties.<sup>201</sup>

Ayatollah Khomeini announced the implementation of the new policy on July 9. Khomeini praised Prime Minister Bazargan for suggesting the amnesty policy and lauded his efforts to serve the nation.<sup>202</sup> At the same time, Brigadier General Saif Amir Rahimi, the Commander of Tehran's military police and a small number of Revolutionary Guards, was dismissed from his post for making unauthorized comments not previously authorized by his superiors.

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<sup>200</sup>Kandell, "Many in Iran Seek the Revival of an Effective Army," New York Times, June 26, 1979, p. 2.

<sup>201</sup>"Iran Decrees Amnesty For Most Military and Police," New York Times, July 4, 1979, p. 5.

<sup>202</sup>Ibrahim, "Wide Amnesty in Iran Declared by Khomeini," New York Times, July 10, 1979, pp. 1 & 10.

The general alleged that the armed forces were engaged in a "major conspiracy to discredit the Islamic Republic." General Rahimi refused to acknowledge the order to dismiss him from Major General Farbod, stating that he would only step down if told to do so by Khomeini himself.<sup>203</sup> At a news conference, the general stated that the armed forces were in a sad state of disarray due to the recent purges and that force reductions had resulted in a drop in manpower from half a million soldiers to 300,000. As a result, all the senior generals were gone and discipline was almost nonexistent. He further stated that all militia groups in Iran should be disbanded and disarmed so as not to conflict with the armed forces.<sup>204</sup>

In the wake of General Rahimi's comments, Ayatollah Khomeini stated that the general should remain in his position. General Rahimi's insistence that all elements of the armed forces must obey their generals had placed him in good stead with the regime. He had specifically aimed his comments at the Homofars, the Air Force technicians who staged the strikes at Farahabad which sounded the death knell for the Shah's regime. When the Homofars refused to do obey orders after the Islamic Republic was established, he ordered them jailed. After Khomeini's statement, Prime Minister Bazargan and

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<sup>203</sup>Ibid.

<sup>204</sup>Ibid.

General Farbod echoed their agreement with the Ayatollah's decision.<sup>205</sup> After his vindication, General Rahimi voiced the need for a disciplined, strong army now that the force was once again "a sound body" after the anti-monarchist purges.<sup>206</sup>

General Farbod was then removed from his post on July 21 allegedly for his "inability to improve morale in the armed forces." He was replaced by General Hussein Shakeri, who, as Iran's third military leader in six months, was given the new title of Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. At the same time, four soldiers were executed for killing anti-Shah demonstrators during the preceding year's unrest.<sup>207</sup>

Soldiers at odds with the government over the execution of a colonel and a sergeant fought with Revolutionary Guards on August 8. The confrontation took place in Orumiye, in northwestern Iran.<sup>208</sup> This led to Revolutionary Guard calls

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<sup>205</sup>Ibrahim, "Iran's Premier Yields to Khomeini, Agreeing Not to Dismiss a General," New York Times, July 11, 1979, pp. 1 & 11.

<sup>206</sup>"Le Monde Interviews Military Police Chief Rahimi," Paris Le Monde in French, FBIS, 14 Jul 79 (LD171049), July 18, 1979, p. R8.

<sup>207</sup>"Religious Broadcaster Murdered in Tehran; Army Chief Is Ousted," New York Times, July 22, 1979, p. 5.

<sup>208</sup>"Iranian Troops Clash With Revolutionary Guards," New York Times, August 9, 1979, p. 7.

for a "complete purge" of the Army to remove "mercenary elements" who engage in "anti-people" plots.<sup>209</sup>

In another significant development in the Islamic Republic's relations with the military, Khomeini went over the heads of military leaders on August 18 and directly ordered soldiers to suppress Kurdish rebels in the town of Paveh. The military leaders in the area around Paveh had voiced their reluctance to use the Army as a tool to quell internal unrest. The Army officers were cognizant of what had befallen other officers who had commanded soldiers used to quell anti-government activities during the Shah's last days and wished to avoid similar fates. Casting aside their doubts, Khomeini stated

As head of the whole army, I give the order to the army Commander in Chief to move into the area with all the necessary preparation and I also give orders to the army garrisons and state police forces that, without awaiting any further order and wasting any time, that they move toward Paveh with the necessary ammunition, preparation and forces.<sup>210</sup>

#### D. THE IDEOLOGICAL PURGE

Defense Minister Dr. Mustafa Chamran spoke to the press on October 1 regarding the roles of the Army and the rationale behind a new wave of "ideological purges." He claimed the

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<sup>209</sup>"Urimiyeh Revolution Guards Call For Army Purge," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 0230 GMT, 09 Aug 79 (LD090858), August 9, 1979, pp. R5-6.

<sup>210</sup>"Iran Is Said to Crush Kurd Revolt; Khomeini Bypasses Army Leaders," New York Times, August 19, 1979, pp. 1 & 13.

purges were necessary to change the existing system in the Army which was "an order created and tailored by the satanic regime." To remedy this existing system, he emphasized that "present revolutionary conditions warrant a change in this order so that the army may be brought into line with revolutionary requirements." He also stated that he had initially thought the Army could be dismantled in favor of the Revolutionary Guards, but that the internal (ethnic) unrest in Iran made the armed forces a necessity (he described the ethnic disturbances as "ominous plots hatched by the colonialists") to the extent that "we will never be able to survive without a strong army."<sup>211</sup>

He codified his comments by stating that although "any request to abolish the army is senseless," that the Army needed to conform to "our Islamic standards as well as our revolution's rules." Stating that the purge would be both Islamic and revolutionary, Chamran claimed

The purge will take place at the very top. At later stages it will embrace lower levels.<sup>212</sup>

The purge of which Chamran spoke was an "Islamicizing" ideological one that "resulted in the discharge of some 12,000 military personnel, the majority of whom were officers, by the

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<sup>211</sup>"New Defense Minister Comments On Army Purge," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1708 GMT, 30 Sep 79 (LD302020), October 1, 1979, p. R14.

<sup>212</sup>Ibid, p. R15.

time of the Iraqi invasion a year later."<sup>213</sup> This Islamic indoctrination (Islamization) was sanctioned in Article 144 of the Iranian Constitution.<sup>214</sup>

In the wake of Chamran's comments, the military leaders became concerned not only with their own future, but with that of the military, which had

already suffered one comprehensive purge of its senior ranks immediately after the revolution, when nearly every general was either dismissed, executed, or forced to flee.

Apart from the general dissatisfaction...many officers found their orders were being ignored. Islamic committees set up by the men to ensure that the military was run in a "revolutionary" fashion, began to quibble over commands.<sup>215</sup>

Recent exercises and successful actions to quell the rebellion in Kurdistan had boosted morale and restored confidence in the military command structure. The Kurdistan military response not only proved the necessity of the Army, it also outlined the inability of the Revolutionary Guards to respond at that time to a "large-scale rebellion."<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>213</sup>Arjomand, The Turban for the Crown, p. 164.

<sup>214</sup>Zabih, The Iranian Military in Revolution and War, p. 136.

<sup>215</sup>Allen-Mills, Tony, "Pledge To Purge Worries Iranian Officers," Daily Telegraph (London), October 4, 1979, p. 6.

<sup>216</sup>At the time of the Kurdistan rebellion, the Revolutionary Guards were not able to suppress the dissidents. Over the course of successive rebellions, insurgencies and the Iran-Iraq War, they developed into a credible military force capable of military operations in a combat environment.



During the Kurdistan campaign, the differences in military proficiency between the Army and the Revolutionary Guards were further accentuated when the Revolutionary Guards, ignoring Army advice to remain in their barracks, ventured into Kurdish territory. They were promptly ambushed by Kurdish rebels, who annihilated them. At this early stage of their existence, the Army's experience and military expertise were recognized as superior to those of the Revolutionary Guards, "whose skills as a fighting force are by no means as advanced as their enthusiasm for Ayatollah Khomeini."<sup>217</sup>

In October, the Iranian Council of Experts approved a constitutional clause granting Khomeini control over the military forces. The Ayatollah was also named Head of the Armed Forces and was awarded the power to declare war in consultation with a military council.<sup>218</sup>

In November 1979, the United States Defense Department issued a statement that the Iranian armed services were "no longer an effective military force." Citing the executions, purges and desertions, the Defense Department stated that discipline had "virtually disappeared," quoting examples of soldiers refusing to obey orders, as well as a dissolution of

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<sup>217</sup>Allen-Mills, "Rebel Kurds Defy Threat Of Destruction," Daily Telegraph, October 12, 1979, p. 5.

<sup>218</sup>"Constitutional Body Backs Key Powers for Khomeini," New York Times, October 16, 1979, p. 2.

the military logistics system, which impeded the flow of spare parts and supplies. Additionally, the breakdown in maintenance and repair capabilities caused by the logistics difficulties had in effect grounded the Air Force and kept the Navy in port.<sup>219</sup>

The purges continued on Jan 12, 1980, when four Army officers accused of firing on anti-Pahlavi demonstrators were executed by a firing squad in Tehran.<sup>220</sup> On February 6, Lieutenant General Jamshid Fathi Moqaddam was sentenced to death. The former commanding artillery officer of an infantry corps was charged with "trying to strengthen the former regime...opposing the Islamic Revolution...resisting God, His Prophet and the vicar of the hidden imam; and carrying out suppression in the army."<sup>221</sup> On February 7, more monarchists left active duty as 145 officers were discharged from the military. They included 91 admirals, 14 colonels, and an assortment of junior officers, NCO's, and technicians.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>219</sup>Halloran, Richard, "U.S. Analysts See Iran's Armed Forces in Disarray," New York Times, November 18, 1979, p. 17 and "Desertions and Disrepair Said to Hit Iran's Army," New York Times, November 28, 1979, p. 11.

<sup>220</sup>"Iran Army officers executed by firing squad," Times, January 14, 1980, p. 4.

<sup>221</sup>"Report on Executions," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1724 GMT, 07 Feb 80 (LD071909), February 8, 1980, p. 15.

<sup>222</sup>"Discharge of Military Personnel," Baghdad INA in Arabic, FBIS, 1715 GMT, 07 Feb 80 (JN071726), February 8, 1980, p. 16.

In the wake of these recent purges, President Bani-Sadr met with the military commanders on February 10 to discuss the reorganization of Iran's armed forces. After the meeting, General Shadmehr, Commander of the Combined Army Staff, stated

The mission and duties of the army have been established by the constitution. Therefore a group of experts have been asked to reorganize the foundation of the army according to these duties established by the constitution. These experts, by organizing work teams and exchanging ideas, will provide for an organization which will be able to defend the borders of the country, up to the limit of a jihad. This organization will, however, require national assistance for defending the borders of the country.<sup>223</sup>

On February 13, General Shadmehr spoke of a "Cleansing and Purging Bill" from the Revolutionary Council. He stated that the Army had been the first of the armed forces to implement this new bill and that the purge was nearly complete. Issuing a warning to any would-be dissidents, he cautioned that persons "who take any action in the future contrary to the path of the revolution will be handed over to a military revolutionary tribunal." Invoking repeatedly the cause of the revolution, he commented regarding those elements of the military who

are trying, through commotion and clamor, to voice certain things which are neither in line with the principles of Islam nor with the laws of the Armed Forces. Most important of all, they are not in line with the imam's commands and recommendations.

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<sup>223</sup>"Experts Asked To Reorganize Armed Forces," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1709 GMT, 10 Feb 80 (LD101856), February 11, 1980, p. 42.

What distinguishes the present army from that which existed in the past is that no ideological issue could be voiced in the past....in the Islamic Republic Armed Forces, by contrast, political and ideological organizations were created after the victory of the revolution. They are responsible for organizing debates and discussions on various ideologies, providing freedom for everyone to voice their views, and generally enabling people to benefit from an exchange of ideas. All this, however, must take place during off-duty hours. We have, for example, Islamic associations whose job it is to hold off-duty debate and discussions with those who do not know much about Islam with a view to winning them over.<sup>224</sup>

In July of 1980, Iranian President Abolhasan Bani-Sadr announced that the Revolutionary Guards had foiled an attempted military coup. He stated that the plotters had attempted to seize an air base in Hamadan Province to then later bomb Ayatollah Khomeini's home in Tehran, as well as other facilities.<sup>225</sup> Seventeen Army officers were arrested in Ahvaz and placed immediately on trial for their part in the plot. The officers were found to possess leaflets proclaiming the authority of the "National Military Council of Iran."<sup>226</sup>

In the wake of the coup attempt, over 300 military personnel were arrested, including a number of Air Force pilots and two generals, one from the Air Force, the other from the

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<sup>224</sup>"Chief Of Joint Staff Interviewed On Army Purges," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1630 GMT, 13 Feb 80 (LD141028), February 14, 1980, pp. 22-24.

<sup>225</sup>Allaway, Tony, "US hostage released by Iranians," Times, July 11, 1980, p.11.

<sup>226</sup>Allaway, "17 officers on trial over Iranian coup 'plot,'" Times, July 12, 1980, p. 5.

Gendarmerie. The generals confessed to having contacts with former Prime Minister Shahpour Bakhtiar and described themselves as "nationalists" seeking the separation of politics from the clergy. The result of the attempted coup was a stronger sentiment for further purges of the military, especially a thorough one of the Air Force.<sup>227</sup> President Bani-Sadr announced that in the trials of the coup plotters, the plotters would be dealt with "in a resolute manner," stating that "some will be executed." Bani-Sadr also admitted that "constant undermining of the morale of the armed forces, especially through purges," had contributed to the sense of dissatisfaction within the military and added an element of pressure to the lives of the professional military.<sup>228</sup>

On July 20, four of the coup planners (including the Air Force General and two other pilots) were executed for "plotting."<sup>229</sup> On July 24, 20 soldiers were executed by a firing squad in Tehran for their role in the attempted coup.

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<sup>227</sup>Allaway, "Two generals accused of plotting Iran coup," Times, July 14, 1980, p. 5. The Air Force as an institution had been very loyal to the Shah because he had ensured that they had been afforded the most advanced technology available to them. Under the Khomeini Regime, the spare parts to keep the F-14 and F-4 fighter jets flying were in short supply. For this reason, the Air Force was less favorably inclined towards the rulers of the Islamic Republic than towards the Pahlavis.

<sup>228</sup>Allaway, "Iran coup plotters face execution," Times, July 17, 1980, p. 1.

<sup>229</sup>"Ayatollah says rule is not Islamic enough," Times, July 22, 1980, p. 5.

Ayatollah Khomeini had personally ordered the death penalty for all persons connected with the plot, which, if successfully carried out, would have bombed his home.<sup>230</sup> In the wake of these events, Bani-Sadr called for an end to the purges and a strengthening of the army, emerging as an advocate of potent military power.<sup>231</sup> With an eye towards potential future conflicts, Bani-Sadr was concerned about the concentration of Iraqi forces along the southwestern Iranian border and wanted to assure that an Iraqi invasion would not push easily into Iran due to a weakened, purged military.<sup>232</sup>

On September 8, Ayatollah Khomeini order an end to the arbitrary arrest and prosecution of military members by military courts. He further ordered that claims against military members not be made public until the suspected soldier's guilt was actually proven. Khomeini's move was an attempt to improve the sagging morale of the armed forces in the wake of the recent arrests as a result of the coup plot (see Table 1 on page 188 for a comparison of military members executed, retired and imprisoned).<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>230</sup>"20 Iranian servicemen shot for plotting coup," Times, July 25, 1980, p. 7.

<sup>231</sup>Bakhash, Shaul, The Reign of the Ayatollahs: Iran and the Islamic Revolution (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1984), p. 119.

<sup>232</sup>Hickman, Ravaged and Reborn, p. 18.

<sup>233</sup>"Ayatollah puts curb on armed forces arrests," Times, September 9, 1980, p. 6.

## E. THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR

On September 22, 1980, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein ordered an invasion of Iran, which "put the entire issue of purging the armed forces in a new perspective,"<sup>234</sup> because the recent purges of the Armed Forces initially resulted in a fragmented opposition to the invaders.<sup>235</sup> In the early stages of the Iran-Iraq War, the Iranian Army was relegated to a secondary role in favor of the Revolutionary Guards. The military was also beset by command and control problems due to the rapid rise of junior officers as a result of the purges of monarchist or ideologically unreliable senior officers. These junior officers were ideologically acceptable to the regime but they had little experience, which further undermined the military's efforts in the early stages of the war.<sup>236</sup> The war did, however, serve as a unifying factor as the military leadership mobilized to support the government and some officers detained under the purges were brought back into service.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>234</sup>Zabih, The Iranian Military in Revolution and War, p. 127.

<sup>235</sup>Pelletiere, Stephen C. and Johnson, Douglas V., II, Lessons Learned: The Iran-Iraq War (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1991), p. 2.

<sup>236</sup>Stanhope, Henry, "Conflict liable to turn into long war of attrition," Times, October 20, 1980, p. 6.

<sup>237</sup>Wright, In the Name of God, p. 93.

In an attempt to rectify command and control deficiencies, Iran's Higher Defense Council established a unified command in October under which all forces, to include the military as well as the Revolutionary Guards, would fall. The Iranian Government hoped to promote discipline and an effective chain of command in order to coordinate effective military activities in the face of the Iraqi onslaught.<sup>238</sup>

Although friction did exist between the professional military leadership and the Revolutionary Guards (who were backed by the mullahs) over how to wage the campaigns of the war, Saddam Hussein's invasion served to place the military squarely in the corner of the Islamic Republic as the war became a fight for national survival. With the passage of time, the armed forces exhibited their valor in defending Iran, proving that their loyalty to the state overrode their animosities with the Pasdaran,<sup>239</sup> who were forced to rely on the professional soldiers for their military expertise.<sup>240</sup>

Differences of approach regarding the war, and specifically on how it should be conducted militarily, have persisted throughout the conflict. There have been instances when it appeared that the military's skills and the Pasdar's fervour might be combined and made

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<sup>238</sup>Mishlawi, Tewfik, "Iran puts its armed forces under unified command," Times, November 1, 1980, p. 4.

<sup>239</sup>Kechichian and Sadri, "National Security," from Metz, ed., Iran, p. 280.

<sup>240</sup>Chubin, Shahram and Tripp, Charles, Iran and Iraq at War (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), p. 43.



complementary, but these moments were fleeting. Suspicions, resentments, political differences and uncertainty clouded relations throughout. These reflected the larger issue - that of the relationship between the Islamic Republic and its military forces.<sup>241</sup>

Another innovation was the creation of the Supreme Defense Council (SDC), which assigned political commissars "to all military echelons down to the division level."<sup>242</sup> The SDC was also assisted by a Political-Ideological Directorate (PID), which worked with the soldiers directly to provide indoctrination, counter dissent, spread propaganda, and oversee security and intelligence activities among the soldiers. An Ershad (Guidance) Organization guided by clerics also served to identify potential political or religious dissidents.<sup>243</sup>

#### F. THE POST-WAR MILITARY

In the end, the Iran-Iraq War served as the catalyst that made the Iranian Armed Forces an effective fighting force capable of defending Iran from external threat.<sup>244</sup> Even though there was a great deal of mutual suspicion between the professional military and the Revolutionary Guards during the

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<sup>241</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>242</sup>Bill, James A. and Springborg, Robert, Politics in the Middle East, Third Edition (HarperCollins Publishers, 1990), pp. 264-5.

<sup>243</sup>Ibid.

<sup>244</sup>Hickman, Ravaged and Reborn, p. 19 and Schahgaldian, The Iranian Military Under the Islamic Republic, p. 37.

initial stages of the war, the exigencies of combat produced a grudging, mutual respect borne out of the shared experience of having defended the country from foreign aggression.<sup>245</sup>

In spite of their defense of Iran from external aggression, the military was still viewed with distrust by the Islamic Republic. This distrust could still be found during the "Reign of Terror," when the government used the Pasdaran instead of the armed forces to suppress the Mujaheddin-e Khalq.<sup>246</sup>

Even after the Islamic Republic had consolidated its hold over the military, dissident elements were to found among the ranks. In connection with an August 1982 plot to overthrow the government masterminded by former Foreign Minister Sadeq Qotbzadeh, 70 military officers were executed.<sup>247</sup>

After the termination of the Iran-Iraq War, the military, seen as the saviors of the nation, enjoyed an increase in popularity.<sup>248</sup> Additionally, the armed forces have been

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<sup>245</sup>Schahgaldian, Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>246</sup>Hickman, Ravaged and Reborn, p. 26.

<sup>247</sup>"70 Iranian officers reported shot after Qotbzadeh 'plot,'" Times, August 17, 1982, p. 6.

<sup>248</sup>Hickman, Ravaged and Reborn, p. 31.

built up both in manpower and equipment since the end of the war.<sup>249</sup>

Although much speculation exists regarding the eventual use of the military's new weaponry, the leaders of the Islamic Republic recognize, as they did at the onset of the revolution, that a strong military under the control of Tehran is essential for the maintenance and exercise of power.

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<sup>249</sup>Atkeson, Edward B., A Military Assessment of the Middle East, 1991-96 (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1992, pp. 32-36 & 48.

### III. PERSECUTION OF ETHNIC MINORITIES

Although Iran is considered a Persian nation, there are various ethnic minorities throughout the country, such as the Kurds, the Azerbaijanis, the Baluchis, the Arabs and the Turkomans. Of these minorities, many have members of the same ethnic group located on the other side of Iran's borders with Pakistan, Afghanistan, Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (at that time, the Soviet Union), Iraq and Turkey.

In the wake of the Iranian Revolution, many of these minorities requested greater measures of autonomy (at no time did the minorities ever call for separatism from Iran). These calls for autonomy were answered with force by the government as it consolidated its power in a coercive manner. The government habitually employed rhetoric that evolved from suave ("our brothers") to very harsh ("enemies of God" or "enemies of the revolution"). The government also habitually coupled its demagoguery with armed repression. After varying exchanges of mutual recriminations, government forces were brought in and provided with a pretext to suppress the minorities who had by then been labelled as "subversive."

Reflecting back on the Iranian Revolution, Edward Said was to comment that "in Iran to this day, the state structure

effectively stifles Azerbaijanis, Baluchis, Kurds, Arabs, and others, who feel their individual ethnic existence compromised as a result."<sup>250</sup>

#### A. THE KURDS

Because they live in different countries such as Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, and the former Soviet Union,<sup>251</sup> the Kurds have historically been frustrated in their goal of obtaining their own independent state.<sup>252</sup> For purposes of clarification, the Kurds will be examined as an ethnic minority as well as a political and religious (Sunni Muslim) one within Iran. In Iran, there are an estimated four million Kurds.<sup>253</sup>

During the First World War when Enver Pasha led an Ottoman attack against Czarist Russia, Persian Kurds formed part of his force.<sup>254</sup> When Reza Khan ascended the Peacock Throne in

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<sup>250</sup>Said, Edward W., Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), p. 59.

<sup>251</sup>Mostyn, Trevor and Hourani, Albert, eds., The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the Middle East and North Africa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 463.

<sup>252</sup>Mansfield, Peter, A History of the Middle East (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), p. 17.

<sup>253</sup>Delury, George E., World Encyclopedia of Political Systems & Parties Second Edition (New York: Facts On File, Ltd., 1987), p. 534.

<sup>254</sup>Hitti, Philip K., The Near East in History: A 5000 Year Story (Princeton, N.J.: D. Van Nostrand Company, INC., 1961), p. 400.

1925, he was forced to engage in guerrilla warfare and subjugate Soviet-sponsored Kurdish chieftains.<sup>255</sup>

A Kurdish separatist movement, the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) was formed with Soviet backing after the Second World War.<sup>256</sup> This movement attempted to break away from Iran and called itself the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad, although it "only contained one third of the Kurds in Iran and was far from being a Kurdish national home."<sup>257</sup> The blatant level of Soviet involvement included supplying Soviet uniforms and weapons to the Kurds.<sup>258</sup> It was subsequently crushed by the Shah after the Soviets, at American insistence, withdrew support.<sup>259</sup> This Soviet involvement in Iranian Kurdistan led to skepticism and suspicion regarding Soviet aims towards

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<sup>255</sup>Ibid., p. 416.

<sup>256</sup>Degenhardt, Henry W., Political Dissent: An International Guide to Dissident, Extra-Parliamentary, Guerrilla and Illegal Political Movements (Burnt Mill, U.K.: Longman Group Limited, 1983), p. 169.

<sup>257</sup>Drysdale, Alasdair and Blake, Gerald H., The Middle East and North Africa: A Political Geography (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 67.

<sup>258</sup>Lenczowski, The Middle East in World Affairs, Fourth Edition (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 182.

<sup>259</sup>Mortimer, Faith and Power: The Politics of Islam (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), p. 310.

Iran, not only under the Shah, but also in the Islamic Republic of Iran.<sup>260</sup>

The Kurds have been described as "an ethnolinguistic minority group who are overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim."<sup>261</sup> As Sunnis,

they belong to the mainstream of Islam. But the same fact sets them sharply apart in Iran, where Shiism is the state religion.<sup>262</sup>

Lois Beck, in an essay from Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East, argues that the Sunni-Shiite differences were exacerbated by Islamic institutions:

Because most Kurdish religious leaders were Sunni, they did not serve to link Kurdish society with Shi'i Iranian religious institutions or with the Shi'i dominated state. In fact, they sometimes served to polarize tribal society and the state. Urban-based 'ulama' in Iran often viewed Shi'i and especially Sunni tribal people as poor or ignorant Muslims, heretics, or infidels.<sup>263</sup>

Additionally, the participation of Sunni Muslims in the Iranian Revolution was limited by the fact that a great deal

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<sup>260</sup>Freedman, Robert O., "Gorbachev, Iran, and the Iran-Iraq War," Keddie and Gasiorowski, Mark J., eds., Neither East Nor West: Iran, the Soviet Union, and the United States (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 118.

<sup>261</sup>Bill and Springborg, Politics in the Middle East, p. 33.

<sup>262</sup>Turner, Arthur Campbell, "Kurdish Nationalism," Chelkowski and Pranger, eds., Ideology and Power in the Middle East, p. 382.

<sup>263</sup>Beck, Lois, "Tribes and the State in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Iran," Khoury, Philip S. and Kostiner, Joseph, eds., Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 202-3.

of revolutionary coordination took place through the Shi'i mosque network and in urban environments.<sup>264</sup>

Although the Kurds were part of the Iran-wide effort to depose the Shah,<sup>265</sup> they were nonetheless excluded from the central decision-making process after the Shah left Iran. The Kurds had in fact

joined the revolution against the shah in return for assurances that they would be granted a considerable measure of local autonomy. They were quickly disabused of this notion after Khomeini came to power.<sup>266</sup>

Although Khomeini used the Kurds as allies against the Shah, once their usefulness was over, he "rapidly made it clear that he opposed any form of ethnic separatism or autonomy."<sup>267</sup>

As the Iranian Revolution progressed, the Kurdish question took on a new character. On March 2, 1979, the KDPI stated their desire for an autonomous Kurdistan in Iran. Their goals were:

1. The boundaries of Kurdistan would be determined by the Kurdish people and would take into consideration historical, economic, and geographical conditions.
2. On matters of defense, foreign affairs, and long-term economic planning, Kurdistan would abide by the

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<sup>264</sup>Ibid., p. 209.

<sup>265</sup>Hegland, "Two Images of Husain," Keddie, ed., Religion and Politics in Iran, p. 218.

<sup>266</sup>Sick, All Fall Down, p. 237.

<sup>267</sup>Cordesman, Anthony H. and Wagner, Abraham R., The Lessons of Modern War, Volume II: The Iran-Iraq War (Boulder, CO: Westview Press Inc., 1990), p. 26.



- central government's decisions. The Central Bank of Iran would control the currency.
3. There would be a Kurdish parliament, whose members would be popularly elected. It would be the highest legislative power in the province.
  4. All government departments in the province would be run locally instead of from the capital.
  5. There would be a people's army, but the police and gendarmerie would be abolished and replaced by a national guard.
  6. The Kurdish language would be the official language of the provincial government and would be taught in all schools. Persian would also continue to be an official language.
  7. All ethnic minorities in Kurdistan would enjoy equal rights and would be allowed to use their own language and traditions.
  8. Freedom of speech and press, rights of association, and trade-union activities would be guaranteed. The Kurdish people would have the right to travel freely and choose their own occupation.<sup>268</sup>

Later that month, Kurdish tribesmen engaged Iranian soldiers in Mahabad.<sup>269</sup> They presented Minister of Labor Daryoush Farouhan with the eight point proposal for autonomy, which he subsequently categorized as "harsh."<sup>270</sup>

On March 18, 1979, Kurdish tribesmen engaged Iranian troops in Sanandaj, taking over an army barracks, a paramilitary police barracks, and a radio station. Approximately 120,000

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<sup>268</sup>Times (London), March 4, 1979, cited by MacDonald, Charles G., "The Kurdish Question in the 1980s," Esman, Milton J. and Rabinovich, Itamar, eds., Ethnicity, Pluralism, and the State in the Middle East (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 241-2.

<sup>269</sup>Kifner, "Kurdish Tribesmen Battle Iran Troops," New York Times, March 20, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>270</sup>New York Times, March 1, 1979, cited by Pelletiere, The Kurds: An Unstable Element in the Gulf (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc., 1984), p. 178.

Kurds held 2,000 soldiers in the barracks while they negotiated with the Iranian government.<sup>271</sup>

Ayatollah Khomeini responded with words as well as deeds. Invoking his own interpretation of theology, he claimed that the Kurds were "acting against Islam" and stated "we do not have any differences with our Sunni brothers."<sup>272</sup> Khomeini then sent helicopter gunships to strafe the gathered Kurds.<sup>273</sup> On March 21, tanks were sent in to augment the helicopter gunships.<sup>274</sup>

In the face of a standoff, Khomeini sent Ayatollah Taleghani to Sanandaj to negotiate with the Kurds.<sup>275</sup> There, he arranged the release of the Iranian soldiers in return for the following concessions:

A Kurd, Ibrahim Yunesi, was appointed governor of Kurdistan; power to appoint security forces in the province was invested in a committee of Kurds, which also had the power to oversee the provincial administration, and Kurdish was to be taught in the schools.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>271</sup>Pelletiere, The Kurds, p. 179.

<sup>272</sup>Kifner, "Kurdish Tribesmen Battle Iran Troops," New York Times, March 20, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>273</sup>Ibid.

<sup>274</sup>Jaynes, "Kurdish Townsman, Ignoring Iran's Appeals for Truce, Continue Fighting," New York Times, March 22, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>275</sup>Jaynes, "Long Kurdish Struggle Now Focuses on Khomeini," New York Times, March 23, 1979, p. 4.

<sup>276</sup>Pelletiere, The Kurds, p. 179.

Additionally, the Iranian government released 168 Kurdish prisoners.<sup>277</sup>

When Iranians voted in Late March 1979 to determine whether or not Iran would be an Islamic Republic, voter turnout in Mahabad, the capital of the Kurdistan Province, was very almost non-existent.<sup>278</sup> Kurdish religious leader Sheik Ezzedin Hosseini called for the Kurds to abstain from voting due the lack of details on a clear definition of an Islamic republic.<sup>279</sup>

On April 21, 1979, the inauguration of a branch office of the Kurdistan Democratic Party in Naghadeh was broken up by Shi'ite ethnic Turks, resulting in violence that led to house to house fighting.<sup>280</sup> The Iranian government sent in troops on April 23 to suppress the Sunni Kurds. Over 800 families were driven into the surrounding mountains by tanks, helicopter gunships and armored vehicles.<sup>281</sup> After five

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<sup>277</sup>"Calm Reported in Sanandaj, Center of Kurdish Revolt," New York Times, March 24, 1979, p. 4.

<sup>278</sup>Keddie, Roots of Revolution, p. 259.

<sup>279</sup>Jaynes, "Landslide Victory for Khomeini Reported in Voting," New York Times, April 1, 1979, p. 6.

<sup>280</sup>Ibrahim, "Kurdish-Turkish Fighting Intensifies in Iranian Town," New York Times, April 23, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>281</sup>Ibrahim, "Iranians Decide to Purge and Phase Out Vigilantes," New York Times, April 26, 1979, p. 10.

days of fighting and hundreds of deaths,<sup>282</sup> the Kurds and Turks were able to agree to a cease-fire, leading to the withdrawal of government forces.<sup>283</sup>

On July 11, Kurds in Mahabad demonstrated to protest an Iranian Government breach of agreement to grant Kurdish autonomy and allow the teaching of Kurdish language and culture. In an appeal for unity, Kurdish leaders stated their intention to remain part of Iran.<sup>284</sup>

Fighting in Kurdistan renewed when Kurds overran the town of Paveh on August 16, 1979.<sup>285</sup> Ayatollah Khomeini sent in government soldiers directly, bypassing the military leaders, whom he accused of lacking revolutionary zeal.<sup>286</sup> Coupling his actions with rhetoric, Khomeini called the Kurds "infidels," ordering revolutionary trials to "crush the plotters."<sup>287</sup> Khomeini knew that "to show any weakness in Kurdistan would encourage other national minorities to demand

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<sup>282</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 169.

<sup>283</sup>Ibrahim, "Iran Reports Cease-Fire in Area Where Kurds and Turks Clashed," New York Times, April 27, 1979, p. 13.

<sup>284</sup>Ibrahim, "Iranian Oil Pipeline Is Cut, Reportedly by Arab Group," New York Times, July 12, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>285</sup>"Kurdish Rebels Said to Seize Town In Western Iran After Fierce Battle," New York Times, August 17, 1979, p. 2.

<sup>286</sup>"Iran Is Said to Crush Kurd Revolt; Khomeini Bypasses Army Leaders," New York Times, August 19, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>287</sup>"Kurds Said to Trap Officials," New York Times, August 18, 1979, p. 5.

similar rights,"<sup>288</sup> which was something the new regime could neither afford nor tolerate.

Due to military high command intransigence and disagreements over using the armed forces to suppress the Kurds, Khomeini initiated a purge of the armed forces. He also began to replace them with a new creation, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, also known as the Pasdaran.<sup>289</sup> After arriving in Paveh, government soldiers then defeated the Kurds, executing eleven Kurdish prisoners.<sup>290</sup>

In the wake of the Paveh situation, Khomeini stated his desire to turn Iran into a one-party state: "We will keep just one party...the rest will be banned."<sup>291</sup> The Kurdish Democratic Party was subsequently banned and the election of Abdul Rahaman Qassemloo as the party's secretary general was declared null and void by the government.<sup>292</sup>

Khomeini then sent government forces and tanks to the Kurdish capital of Sanandaj, claiming they were needed to

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<sup>288</sup>Parsa, Misagh, Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 1989), p. 259.

<sup>289</sup>Cordesman and Wagner, Modern War, p. 34.

<sup>290</sup>"Iran Is Said to Crush Kurd Revolt," New York Times, August 19, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>291</sup>Ibid.

<sup>292</sup>"Iran's Troops Move on Kurdish Capital at Khomeini's Order," New York Times, August 20, 1979, p. 12.

crush a rebellion taking place.<sup>293</sup> In doing so, he appointed himself Commander-in-Chief of the Iranian military forces and declared a general mobilization.<sup>294</sup> Khomeini justified the mobilization and deployment by claiming that the Kurds were on the verge of seizing weaponry for anti-government purposes.<sup>295</sup> Khomeini also issued a call for the Iranian population to hunt down members of the Kurdish Democratic Party<sup>296</sup> and, in keeping with his theological tendency to demonize his opponents, called the KDPI the "party of Satan."<sup>297</sup>

Eighteen Kurds were executed on August 21 for being "agents of America."<sup>298</sup> In a change of strategy, Khomeini then offered the Kurds the choice of approximately 75 million dollars to cease hostilities in the town of Saqqiz or face harsh punishment. Khomeini stated the Kurds must "join Islam"

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<sup>293</sup>Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>294</sup>Wright, In the Name of God, p. 219.

<sup>295</sup>"Iran's Troops Move On Kurdish Capital," New York Times, August 20, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>296</sup>"22 Newspapers Forced to Close by Iran Regime," New York Times, August 21, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>297</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>298</sup>"Iran Executes 18 Kurdish Rebels; Expels 5 More Western Reporters," New York Times, August 22, 1979, p. 1.

because "there is no difference between the nationalities."<sup>299</sup> The Kurds did not accept Khomeini's offer and the government responded with helicopter gunships that performed continuous strafing runs. These runs were illuminated at night by flares<sup>300</sup> and were so intense that rescue teams could not remove wounded bodies from the street in order to administer medical care.<sup>301</sup> The Iranian Government executed a physician named Rashvand-Sardari for "treating a wounded Kurdish rebel."<sup>302</sup> The government also employed F-4 Phantom supersonic jets to fly at low altitudes over Kurdish positions for psychological intimidation purposes.<sup>303</sup>

Khomeini denounced the Kurds stating "you were not a good people...you were not Islamic," and "We know you are bad people and we will not give you freedom."<sup>304</sup> By August 26, government forces had retaken Saqqiz with the help of helicopter gunships, supersonic jets, tanks, rockets, and

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<sup>299</sup>"Khomeini Offers Money to Kurds In Apparent Effort to End Uprising," New York Times, August 23, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>300</sup>"Kurdish Rebels In Fierce Battle With Iran Force," New York Times, August 24, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>301</sup>Ibid.

<sup>302</sup>Bakhash, The Reign of the Ayatollahs, p. 60.

<sup>303</sup>Ibid.

<sup>304</sup>"Kurdish Rebels In Fierce Battle With Iran Force," New York Times, August 24, 1979, p. 7.

heavy artillery.<sup>305</sup> Khomeini sentenced nine Kurds to execution on August 27 for armed rebellion against the Islamic Republic.<sup>306</sup>

The government then carried the offensive even further. They first executed twenty persons in connection for aiding and abetting the Kurds in the fighting at Saqqiz. Government forces then surrounded Mahabad.<sup>307</sup> Rejecting a Kurdish request for negotiations, Abolhassan Bani-Sadr publicly stated:

There is no justification whatsoever for the systematic subversion of minorities who want to impose violence on our people. As soon as they stop acting in this manner, brotherly Islamic cooperation can begin. It is not up to us to declare a cease-fire.<sup>308</sup>

In contrast to the official government version, Ayatollah Kazem Shariatmadari indicated he favored a formal cease-fire and negotiations with the Kurds. He stated "I have no doubt that this war is imposed on them" and offered to intervene on behalf of the Kurds.<sup>309</sup>

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<sup>305</sup>"Iran's Troops Crush Kurdish Rebel Siege; New Fight Expected," New York Times, August 27, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>306</sup>"Kurds Report Agreement on Truce In Talks With Khomeini Associate," New York Times, August 28, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>307</sup>"Iranians Execute 20 In Kurdish Uprising," New York Times, August 29, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>308</sup>Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>309</sup>"Iran Says Kurds Will Allow Army In Mahabad but a Leader Denies It," New York Times, August 30, 1979, p. 4.



In late August of 1979, Iranian Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan unsuccessfully requested that Ayatollah Khomeini accept his resignation, stating "the country is not aware that we have a war cabinet which holds regular sessions on Kurdistan."<sup>310</sup> At the same time, Khomeini accused the Kurds of attempting to establish a Communist state within Iran and called for the execution of Kurdish leaders.<sup>311</sup>

Khomeini's anti-Kurdish rhetoric was part of a "major public campaign to whip up popular support against the Kurds."<sup>312</sup> Gary Sick, in his account of the Iranian Revolution, All Fall Down, related the following:

In some respects, the "phony war" against the Kurds could be regarded as a model for the political techniques that Khomeini was to use on a much larger scale...he exploited the dramatic circumstances...to whip up public emotions, to mobilize popular support behind his own leadership when it showed signs of erosion, to weaken or crush domestic opposition to his programs, and to press singlemindedly for the adoption of controversial elements of his theocratic plans even at the risk of multiplying turmoil and sacrifice. The Kurdish campaign of August 1979 was more obviously contrived than the major conflicts that followed, but it provided a foretaste of the ruthlessness and political adroitness that would confound Khomeini's enemies repeatedly in the months and years to come.<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>310</sup>"Iran's Prime Minister Again Asks to Resign, Citing Lack of Power," New York Times, September 1, 1979, p. 5.

<sup>311</sup>Ibid.

<sup>312</sup>Sick, All Fall Down, p. 237.

<sup>313</sup>Ibid.

Khomeini then "opened a full-scale assault on the Kurds,"<sup>314</sup> which was composed of air and ground forces, including over 100 tanks, directed against opposition forces in Mahabad.<sup>315</sup> Government tanks, helicopter gunships and jets subsequently pushed into Mahabad, driving over 100,000 Kurds into the surrounding hills.<sup>316</sup> As the Kurds regrouped in the town of Sardasht, government soldiers closed in, awaiting the order to advance.<sup>317</sup>

As the government soldiers moved into Sardasht, the Kurds fled once again into the surrounding areas.<sup>318</sup> Over the next few weeks, the Kurds engaged in limited combat against government forces, attacking an armored column,<sup>319</sup> frontier posts,<sup>320</sup> and the Mahabad police station.<sup>321</sup>

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<sup>314</sup>Pelletiere, The Kurds, p. 181.

<sup>315</sup>"Iran Reports Broad New offensive To Put Down Kurdish Insurrection," New York Times, September 2, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>316</sup>"Kurdish Rebels Flee Stronghold As Iranians Drive Through Lines," New York Times, September 4, 1979, p. 4.

<sup>317</sup>"50,000 Iranian Kurds Said to Flee To Asylum Near the Iraq Border," New York Times, September 6, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>318</sup>"Tehran Says Its Forces Capture Kurdish Rebels' Last Stronghold," New York Times, September 7, 1979, p. 10.

<sup>319</sup>"Kurds Almost Wipe Out Column of Iranian Troops," New York Times, October 11, 1979, p. 7.

<sup>320</sup>"Kurdish Guerrillas Destroy Frontier Post in Iran," New York Times, October 12, 1979, p. 4.

<sup>321</sup>"Kurdish Rebels Said to Kill Police Chief and 3 Others," New York Times, October 14, 1979, p. 11.

In late October, fighting resumed in Mahabad, where government helicopter gunships and tanks assaulted Kurdish positions.<sup>322</sup> The Kurds were able to assume control of the city and called for peace negotiations with the government.<sup>323</sup> In response, the government agreed to limited self-rule in the Kurdish provinces.<sup>324</sup>

In December of 1979, a country-wide vote was held to decide on the referendum for an Islamic constitution. Throughout Kurdistan, voter turnout was almost nonexistent due to Qassemloo's banishment from the Assembly of Experts.<sup>325</sup> As tensions mounted in Kurdistan over the referendum, the government moved soldiers back into the area, in violation of the cease-fire agreement that had been reached with the Kurds.<sup>326</sup> The Kurds were also angered by government references to two Kurdish leaders as "agents of Zionism and corruption."<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>322</sup>"Kurds Said to Control City in Northwest Iran After Heavy Fighting," New York Times, October 21, 1979, p. 8.

<sup>323</sup>"Fighting Said to Continue in Northwest Iran City," New York Times, October 23, 1979, p. 11.

<sup>324</sup>"Iranian Officials Tell Kurds Of Limited Self-Rule Plan," New York Times, November 3, 1979, p. 7.

<sup>325</sup>"Kurds in Iran Shun Referendum, Stressing Self-Rule Aim," New York Times, December 4, 1979, p. 11.

<sup>326</sup>Kifner, "Iran Moving Troops Against Kurds To Curb Unrest Over New Charter," New York Times, December 7, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>327</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

On December 17, 1979, Khomeini stated his position vis-a-vis the Kurds (and all other ethnic minorities) in Iran during a radio address:

Sometimes the word minorities is used to refer to such people as Kurds, Lurs, Turks, Persians, Baluchis and such. These people should not be called minorities, because this term assumes that there is a difference between these brothers. In Islam, such a difference has no place at all. There is no difference between Muslims who speak different languages, for instance, the Arabs or the Persians. It is very probable that such problems have been created by those who do not wish Muslim countries to be united.

They created the issues of nationalism, of pan-Iranism, of pan-Turkism, and such isms, which are contrary to Islamic doctrines. Their plan is to destroy Islam and the Islamic philosophy.<sup>328</sup>

By claiming that any divergence from the Imam's line was un-Islamic, Khomeini, in a de facto sense, removed the theological legitimacy from any activities of which he did not approve. He was to often use anti-minority rhetoric interspersed with theological explanations to justify government suppression of minorities.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>328</sup>Radio Tehran, December 17, 1979-British Broadcasting Corporation, Summary of World Broadcasts, December 19, cited by MacDonald, "The Kurdish Question," Esman and Rabinovich, eds., Ethnicity, Pluralism, and the State, p. 245.

<sup>329</sup>Halliday, Fred, "Iranian Foreign Policy Since 1979: Internationalism and Nationalism in the Islamic Revolution," Cole, Juan R.I. and Keddie, eds., Shi'ism and Social Protest (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 102.

In April of 1980, fighting broke out again in Saqqiz,<sup>330</sup> and also in Sanandaj, the latter of which was put down with helicopter gunships and jets.<sup>331</sup> In July of 1980, the Iranian government called for a "cleansing" of Kurdistan by the armed forces.<sup>332</sup> A few days later, the commander of the Sanandaj Revolutionary Guards warned residents to surrender all arms and "return to Islam ...before we purge the area."<sup>333</sup>

In August of 1980, the government prohibited the flow of medicine and diesel fuel into Kurdistan, negatively impacting the sick and wounded as well as local agriculture. The Kurds engaged in a series of clashes with government forces in order to open the roads and remove the blockades.<sup>334</sup>

In February of 1981, fighting between government forces and Kurds resulted in the Kurdish recapture of Mahabad. Fighting also took place in Sanandaj and Saqqiz. The Iranian government offered the Kurds more autonomy in return for

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<sup>330</sup>Allaway, "Student violence leads to Tehran purges," Times, April 19, 1980, p. 5.

<sup>331</sup>Allaway, "Gunships and jets attack Kurdish rebel city," Times, April 25, 1980, p. 1.

<sup>332</sup>Fisk, Robert, "Iran demand for ban on left-wing opposition," Times, July 5, 1980, p. 1.

<sup>333</sup>Allaway, "Armenian women in a quandary," Times, July 11 1980, p. 8.

<sup>334</sup>"Kurds claim victory over government forces," Times, August 12, 1980, p. 5.

support in the war against Iraq.<sup>335</sup> The Kurds rejected the government's offers of pardon and fighting continued around Mahabad. Many residents fled as government artillery and mortars destroyed buildings in the city.<sup>336</sup>

In July of 1981, the Kurds were assessed as a "serious armed threat to Ayatollah Khomeini's regime"<sup>337</sup> due in part to their alignment with Bani-Sadr, who had fallen out of official favor. The Times of London described their forces as "the most heavily armed and the best trained" as they engaged in continued skirmishes with government forces.<sup>338</sup> In November of 1981, the KDPI formally joined the National Council of Resistance, an organization of Iranian expatriates who were out of favor with the regime.<sup>339</sup>

Throughout 1982, the Kurds fought the government forces, who were primarily concerned with Iraqi troops. During an Iranian offensive in August of 1982, government forces led by the

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<sup>335</sup>"Kurds claim their foes have taken former capital," Times, February 3, 1981, p. 6.

<sup>336</sup>"Kurds spurn Tehran's pardon offer," Times, February 10, 1981, p. 5.

<sup>337</sup>"Guerrillas killed in Iran clash," Times, July 6, 1981, p. 5.

<sup>338</sup>Ibid.

<sup>339</sup>Teimourian, Hazhir, "Expulsions ordered by Baghdad," Times, November 7, 1981, p. 4.

Pasdaran<sup>340</sup> also attacked Kurdish strongholds with tanks, helicopter gunships and artillery.<sup>341</sup> At the same time, Kurdish groups in Paris, France alleged that the Iranian government was resorting to the mass imprisonment and deportation of Kurdish families from the Kurdish provinces.<sup>342</sup>

Revolutionary Guards clashed with Kurdish forces near Mahabad in May of 1983, causing the deaths of "large numbers of counterrevolutionaries," according to Tehran radio. Tehran Radio also reported that several officials of the Kurdish Democratic Party had been arrested.<sup>343</sup>

On July 23, 1983, Iranian forces launched an attack into Kurdistan. With a four-to-one advantage in manpower, they were able to dislodge Kurdish forces from Mahabad, Bukhan and Baqquez.<sup>344</sup> From that point, Iran had the "manpower and ethnic unity to mercilessly put down any Kurdish resistance."<sup>345</sup>

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<sup>340</sup>Cordesman and Wagner, Modern War, p. 122.

<sup>341</sup>Teimourian, "Kurdish strongholds under attack," Times, August 27, 1982, p. 6.

<sup>342</sup>Ibid.

<sup>343</sup>"Kurdish Operations," from a Tehran radio broadcast, Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), May 3, 1983.

<sup>344</sup>Cordesman and Wagner, Modern War, p. 166.

<sup>345</sup>Ibid., p. 207.

On February 9, 1984, The Times reported that Amnesty International was in receipt of information concerning extra-judicial executions of "unarmed villagers of all ages," in Kurdish areas.<sup>346</sup>

Even though the Kurdish uprisings "never posed any serious threat to the central government,"<sup>347</sup> they did seek to "establish themselves in a strong bargaining position vis-a-vis the government"<sup>348</sup> in order to further voice their grievances with some measure of credibility and leverage.

In the final analysis, Iran has never wanted to allow Kurdish autonomy and would not be likely to alter their position towards the Kurds. Additionally, the methods used with the Kurds were to be the standard responses applied to other groups that the government viewed as subversive. The escalation of rhetoric used in conjunction with armed force became the trademarks of governmental repression.

History has shown that, in Iran, "Kurdish nationalism and separatism have invariably been met with repression."<sup>349</sup> As

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<sup>346</sup>McGregor, Alan, "Fear for torture victims," Times, February 9, 1984, p. 6.

<sup>347</sup>Turner, "Kurdish Nationalism," Chelkowski and Pranger, eds., Ideology and Power in the Middle East, p. 409.

<sup>348</sup>Chubin and Tripp, Iran and Iraq at War, pp. 107-8.

<sup>349</sup>Drysdale and Blake, The Middle East and North Africa, p. 155.



long as they fall under non-Kurdish rule, "the Kurds are, and will remain, pawns in the hands of greater forces."<sup>350</sup>

#### B. THE AZERBAIJANIS

Azerbaijanis who live in Iran are also known as Azeri Turks and Azerbaijani Turks. Located in the North-Western section of the country, they control the grain-producing areas of Qazvin, Kermanshah, Reza'iyeh and Tabriz.<sup>351</sup> Approximately 15,000,000 Azerbaijani Turks live in Iran, constituting its largest ethnic minority group.<sup>352</sup>

In December of 1945, Soviet forces helped establish the Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan in Tabriz and prevented Iranian forces from entering the area to suppress the separatist movement.<sup>353</sup> The Soviet aim was that the Azerbaijanis secede from Iran to join the Soviet Union.<sup>354</sup> Under pressure from the United Nations, Soviet soldiers

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<sup>350</sup>Turner, "Kurdish Nationalism," Chelkowski and Pranger, eds., Ideology and Power in the Middle East, p. 410.

<sup>351</sup>Mostyn and Hourani, eds., Cambridge Encyclopedia, p. 32.

<sup>352</sup>Central Intelligence Agency, The World Factbook 1992 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), p. 160.

<sup>353</sup>Lenczowski, American Presidents and the Middle East, pp. 9-10.

<sup>354</sup>Mansfield, A History of the Middle East, p. 249.

withdrew in 1946.<sup>355</sup> After the Soviet withdrawal, the Iranian Government regained control of Azerbaijan.<sup>356</sup>

Azerbaijani Turks were part of the anti-Shah coalition that led to his fall. Shi'ite leader Ayatollah Kazem Shariatmadari called for demonstrations in Tabriz in 1977 that began the unrest that eventually culminated in the Shah's ouster.<sup>357</sup> After the Shah's departure, Shariatmadari did not accept the supreme authority of Ayatollah Khomeini or the concept of the predominance of a ruling clergy in the form of a theocracy.<sup>358</sup> Shariatmadari was also criticized by Khomeini for raising questions over the wisdom of public whippings and executions of pregnant women, young children and old men.<sup>359</sup>

Azerbaijani resistance to the Islamic Republic of Iran was sparked by the December 2, 1979 vote on the referendum for an Islamic Constitution. Shariatmadari told Azerbaijanis he was not going to vote on the referendum. The Azerbaijani Muslim People's Party then called for a boycott, resulting in low

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<sup>355</sup>Lenczowski, The Middle East in World Affairs, pp. 182-3.

<sup>356</sup>Herrmann, Richard, "The Role of Iran in Soviet Perceptions and Policy, 1946-1988," Keddie and Gasiorowski, eds., Neither East Nor West, p. 64.

<sup>357</sup>Gupte, Pranay, "Left in Iran Split by Stand Over Khomeini," New York Times, December 6, 1979, p. 18.

<sup>358</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 168.

<sup>359</sup>Bakhash, The Reign of the Ayatollahs, p. 89.

voter turnout in Tabriz and the surrounding areas.<sup>360</sup> Shariatmadari's concern with the referendum was the ultimate authority of religious leaders over other types of authority and the lack of personal autonomy for Iranians.<sup>361</sup> Shariatmadari, while calling for the revision of various articles due to what he described as "inherent contradictions," stated the constitution was acceptable.<sup>362</sup>

Azerbaijani objections to Khomeini's stance were grounded in Shariatmadari's fear of a theocracy that would establish religious domination over secular aspects of society.<sup>363</sup> Apprehension regarding Khomeini's attitude towards Azeri autonomy as articulated by Shariatmadari compounded the ambivalent attitude towards the referendum as well.<sup>364</sup>

In reaction to the Azerbaijani religious leader's call for a boycott, Khomeini supporters on December 5 marched against and attacked Shariatmadari's home in the holy city of Qom, resulting in an Azerbaijani guard's death.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>360</sup>Gupte, "Member of Iranian Minority Says Khomeini Charter Is 'Not for Us,'" New York Times, December 5, 1979, p. 18.

<sup>361</sup>Ibid.

<sup>362</sup>Gupte, "Left in Iran Split by Stand Over Khomeini," New York Times, December 6, 1979, p. 18.

<sup>363</sup>Kifner, "An Ayatollah's Boycott of Vote Assailed," New York Times, December 6, 1979, p. 18.

<sup>364</sup>Ibid.

<sup>365</sup>Ibid.

In retaliation for the attack on Shariatmadari's house, on December 6, Azeris occupied government buildings, to include the Governor's mansion, in effect taking control of Tabriz and Azerbaijan Province.<sup>366</sup> Shariatmadari's supporters, led by the Muslim People's Party, also took control of the government operated radio and television stations.<sup>367</sup> They were endorsed by local police as well as local Iranian Army and Air Force personnel in the region.<sup>368</sup> Shariatmadari supporters and Khomeini supporters then clashed in Tabriz. Shariatmadari's supporters also staged a peaceful reciprocal march on the Qom home of Ayatollah Khomeini.<sup>369</sup>

Shariatmadari soon met with Khomeini and stated that although Azerbaijani Turks should be granted autonomy, "we do not want freedom separate from Iran."<sup>370</sup> Azeris maintained their occupation of government facilities with the support of local police and military personnel.<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>366</sup>Kifner, "Iran Moving Troops Against Kurds To Curb Unrest Over New Charter," New York Times, December 7, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>367</sup>Ibid.

<sup>368</sup>Ibid.

<sup>369</sup>Ibid.

<sup>370</sup>Kifner, "Dissident Ayatollah Appears To Support Provincial Uprising," New York Times, December 8, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>371</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

Shariatmadari later proclaimed that agreements he had made with the government were being broken, in spite of "very fruitful and effective" talks with Khomeini.<sup>372</sup> At the same time, Pasdaran raided the offices of a prominent Azeri in Tehran and arrested six members of his staff.<sup>373</sup>

In Tabriz, Shariatmadari's supporters prevented Murreidin Gharavi, the provincial governor from returning to his offices. Gharavi publicly stated "we will act forcefully" to regain control of the government offices. At the same time, Shariatmadari's supporters prevented two planes containing troops loyal to the central government from landing.<sup>374</sup>

Government loyalists recaptured the radio and television stations in Tabriz on December 9 but were driven out the same day by Shariatmadari supporters. In the wake of the conflict, Gharavi called the Moslem People's Party "Communists and leftists" that had received the support of terrorist groups.<sup>375</sup> Escalating the rhetoric with an injection of interpretative theology, Khomeini stated that "revolting

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<sup>372</sup>Kifner, "A Key Ayatollah Warns Tehran On Breaking Azerbaijani Accords," New York Times, December 9, 1979, pp. 1 & 8.

<sup>373</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>374</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>375</sup>Gupte, "Fighting Breaks out For Tabriz Station; 3 Reported Killed," New York Times, December 10, 1979, p. 1.

against the Islamic Republic is a great sin - just like blasphemy."<sup>376</sup>

On December 28, fighting broke out between supporters of Shariatmadari and Khomeini in Tabriz. The violence occurred in response to government raids on the homes of members of the Muslim People's Party as well as party offices.<sup>377</sup> Further violence erupted between supporters of Khomeini and Shariatmadari on January 7, 1980 in Tabriz.<sup>378</sup>

Revolutionary Guards seized Muslim People's Party offices in Tabriz on January 11, 1980 and took a number of party members as prisoners. On the following day, eleven party members were summarily executed for "waging war on God and his messenger."<sup>379</sup> On January 26, four more party members were executed for plotting a coup. On May 23, two more party members were executed for participating in the uprisings of December, 1979.<sup>380</sup>

After the executions of many of his supporters, Shariatmadari was forced to retreat in order to keep his

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<sup>376</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>377</sup>Kifner, "New Clash Erupts in Tabriz and Hostages Are Seized," New York Times, December 29, 1979, p. 5.

<sup>378</sup>Brogan, Patrick, "US pursues call for sanctions against Iran," Times, January 8, 1980, p. 4.

<sup>379</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 168.

<sup>380</sup>"Shah's health improving but seclusion continues," Times, May 24, 1980, p. 5.

followers out of a confrontation with the central government.<sup>381</sup> Shariatmadari was then made the target of a propaganda campaign waged to decrease his credibility. "Doctored documents were produced to suggest that in negotiations with the Shah's government in 1978, Shariatmadari had approved of martial law and had described himself as an opponent of Khomeini."<sup>382</sup>

These allegations contradicted the fact that Shariatmadari's call for demonstrations in Tabriz in February of 1977 was the catalyst that began a string of anti-Shah activities leading to the fall of the Pahlavi Dynasty.<sup>383</sup> The allegations also ignored the fact that Shariatmadari had helped to elevate Khomeini to "his high religious position."<sup>384</sup> Khomeini's overall behavior and position vis-a-vis Shariatmadari were political rather than religious, although the former's rhetoric implied a certain theological legitimacy.

Following his implication in the plot to kill Khomeini, Shariatmadari was stripped of his title and placed under house

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<sup>381</sup>Rubin, Paved With Good Intentions, p. 310.

<sup>382</sup>Bakhash, The Reign of the Ayatollahs, p. 223.

<sup>383</sup>Kifner, "An Ayatollah's Boycott of Vote Assailed," New York Times, December 6, 1979, p. 18.

<sup>384</sup>Vecsey, George, "Growing Dissident Voice in Iran," New York Times, December 8, 1979, p. 4.

arrest on September 30, 1981.<sup>385</sup> He remained there until his death on April 3, 1986.<sup>386</sup> With the removal of Shariatmadari, the Azeris were "broken by repression,"<sup>387</sup> leaving the government in undisputed control of the situation in Azerbaijan.

### C. THE BALUCHIS

The Baluchis occupy parts of Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Ethnically related to the Kurds, they may have originally come from the shores of the Caspian Sea<sup>388</sup> and have historically been denied an independent state of their own.<sup>389</sup> There are an estimated 750,000 Baluchis in Iran,<sup>390</sup> who are isolated from the central government in Tehran by 800 miles of desert and inhospitable terrain.<sup>391</sup> The Baluchis were held in check

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<sup>385</sup>"Two more shot for 'Qotbzadeh plot,'" Times, October 1, 1981, p. 8.

<sup>386</sup>Banks, Arthur S., ed., Political Handbook of the World: 1992 (Binghamton, N.Y.: CSA Publications, 1992), p. 359.

<sup>387</sup>Rubin, "The State of U.S.-Iran Relations," Rosen, Barry M., ed., Iran Since the Revolution: Internal Dynamics, Regional Conflict, and the Superpowers (New York: Social Science Monographs, 1985), p. 104.

<sup>388</sup>Kifner, "Iran Troubled by Traditional Resistance of Its Minorities," New York Times, April 11, 1979, p. 8.

<sup>389</sup>Pace, "Iran's Minorities: A History of Conflict," New York Times, December 23, 1979, p. 14.

<sup>390</sup>Delury, World Encyclopedia, p. 534.

<sup>391</sup>Drysdale and Blake, The Middle East and North Africa, p. 155.



by the Pahlavis and, like other ethnic minorities in the country, saw the Iranian Revolution as a possible means to forward their hopes for a Baluchi state.<sup>392</sup>

As Iranians prepared to vote on whether or not to establish an Islamic Republic, Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan appealed to "our Baluchi brothers" for calm in the face of unrest.<sup>393</sup> In order to prevent anti-government coordination, telephones did not function in the Baluchi capital of Zahidan.<sup>394</sup> The appeal for unity was followed by a visit from Iranian Defense Minister Rear Admiral Ahmad Madani. Khomeini also accused the Baluchis of "spreading poison and disunion" with American aid in order to alienate them from other Iranians.<sup>395</sup> Given the tone of anti-American propaganda prevalent in Iran during that time, being accused of complicity with the Americans was a psychological warfare measure calculated to provoke hostility towards the anti-government forces.

In the wake of the voting that produced an Islamic Republic, sporadic disturbances took place in Baluchistan. Iranian Deputy Prime Minister Abbas Amir Entezam called the Baluchis

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<sup>392</sup>Pace, "Iran's Minorities," New York Times, December 23, 1979, p. 14.

<sup>393</sup>Kifner, "Iran Winds Up Campaign to Get Out Vote Today for an Islamic Republic," New York Times, March 30, 1979, p. 6.

<sup>394</sup>Ibid.

<sup>395</sup>Ibid.

"counterrevolutionaries and agents of the former regime" and demanded that they end the disturbances.<sup>396</sup>

The Baluchis were part of the ethnic unrest that took place in many areas of Iran in December of 1979 due to controversy over the new Islamic Constitution. Iran's proposal to make Shi'ism the official national religion caused a great deal of consternation in Sunni Baluchistan.<sup>397</sup> Sunni Islam's strong hold on Baluchistan had offered Shi'i Islam few opportunities for encroachment.<sup>398</sup> The religious issue was exacerbated by a shortage of food and other staples<sup>399</sup> and a general condition of poverty.<sup>400</sup> Baluchi tribesmen in Zahidan then took the Governor General and other government officials as surety and demanded autonomy within the month.<sup>401</sup>

On December 20, 1979, fighting broke out between Baluchi tribesmen and Iranians in Zahidan. The ethnic violence was sparked by the presence of former Foreign Minister Dr. Ibrahim

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<sup>396</sup>Jaynes, "Khomeini Declares Victory in Vote For a 'Government of God' in Iran," New York Times, April 2, 1979, p. 6.

<sup>397</sup>Kifner, "Iran Moving Troops Against Kurds To Curb Unrest Over New Charter," New York Times, December 7, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>398</sup>Keddie and Cole, "Introduction," Cole and Keddie, eds., Shi'ism and Social Protest, p. 16.

<sup>399</sup>Gupte, "For Now, the Baluchis Hold Their Fire," New York Times, December 25, 1979, p. 4.

<sup>400</sup>Keddie, Roots of Revolution, p. 265.

<sup>401</sup>Kifner, "A Key Ayatollah Warns Tehran On Breaking Azerbaijani Accords," New York Times, December 9, 1979, p. 1.

Yazdi. Dr Yazdi was in Zahidan to assess the situation for the central government and to make a public speech appealing for calm.<sup>402</sup>

The Iranian Government responded by declaring a state of emergency in Zahidan on December 22 and sent armed forces equipped with tanks and armored personnel carriers to restore calm to the area.<sup>403</sup> The Governor of Baluchistan, Habib Ghariri, stated that "foreigners" had caused the violence, which was later "confirmed" by government sources.<sup>404</sup> The Baluchi religious and political leader, Mowlavi Abdul-Aziz, also broadcast an appeal for calm.<sup>405</sup> As Revolutionary Guards patrolled the city, the government announced that "in view of the critical situation in Zahidan, the Army will take over until further notice to maintain security and peace."<sup>406</sup>

Criticizing the presence of Pasdaran forces in Baluchistan, Abdul-Aziz commented

There seems to be an epidemic in the central government that whoever is standing for his own regional rights is an agitator or troublemaker or a foreigner.

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<sup>402</sup>Wren, Christopher S., "In New Ethnic Violence in Iran, Baluchis Battle Persians," New York Times, December 21, 1979, p. 12.

<sup>403</sup>Gupte, "Iran Declares State of Emergency In Baluchistan as Fight Continues," New York Times, December 23, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>404</sup>Ibid.

<sup>405</sup>Ibid.

<sup>406</sup>Ibid.

Our feeling is that we want autonomy within Iran...We want outside officials to get out, and by that we mean first and foremost this terrible governor Jaririe. We want all the Pasdarans to get out, because they have been harassing us and molesting our women.<sup>407</sup>

A cessation of hostilities took place due as much to the presence of soldiers, tanks, and armored personnel carriers as to the presence of Yazdi. Governor Ghariri publicly stated he had the best interests of all at heart, but that the Baluchis needed to let him fix the situation.<sup>408</sup> At the same time, he referred to the Baluchis as "smugglers and illiterate" people.<sup>409</sup> Yazdi and Abdul-Aziz negotiated a cease-fire, which included the joint supervision of Pasdaran and Baluchis to enforce the truce.<sup>410</sup>

#### D. THE ARABS

There are over 2,000,000 Arabs in Khuzistan Province, which was called Arabistan before oil was discovered there.<sup>411</sup> Upon the discovery of oil, ethnic Persians began to move into the area, obtaining a monopoly on jobs with better pay and

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<sup>407</sup>Gupte, "For Now, the Baluchis Hold Their Fire," New York Times, December 25, 1979, p. 4.

<sup>408</sup>Ibid.

<sup>409</sup>Ibid.

<sup>410</sup>Gupte, "Iran Declares State of Emergency In Baluchistan as Fight Continues," Times, December 22, 1979, p. 4.

<sup>411</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 167.

more power, which caused resentment among the native Arab population.<sup>412</sup>

After Reza Shah took power, he changed the name of the province to Khuzistan and "then proceeded to methodically crush any signs of Arab nationalism, suppress Arabic as a language, resettle the population to reduce what was then a strong Arab majority, and to exploit the province for his own ends."<sup>413</sup>

When it appeared that there would be no change of status for them after the fall of the Shah, ethnic Arabs in the oil-producing province of Khuzistan took control of municipal buildings in the oil field city of Ahvaz and the port of Khorramshahr in April of 1979. A government spokesman stated that the Arabs, who were demanding that Arabic be taught in the schools, were "in the process of conspiring,"<sup>414</sup> and claimed

counterrevolutionary elements have once again been infiltrating among the decent and honorable people, and are involved in certain plots. We expect to uncover further plots as well. The efforts of the counterrevolutionaries will be fruitless."<sup>415</sup>

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<sup>412</sup>Ibid.

<sup>413</sup>Cordesman and Wagner, Modern War, p. 12.

<sup>414</sup>Kifner, "Iran Troubled by Traditional Resistance of Its Minorities," New York Times, April 11, 1979, p. 8.

<sup>415</sup>"Spokesman Entezam Comments on Unrest, 'Superpower' Presence," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1030 GMT, 01 Apr 79, (LD011330), April 2, 1979, p. R14.

The Government claimed soon after that a separatist movement had been discovered and foiled. "Observers noted that this was the first mention of 'separatism' rather than 'autonomy' referred to by authorities in relation to incidents involving ethnic minorities.<sup>416</sup> The government's mention of separatism was a purposeful misnomer perpetrated to exacerbate the inherent tension of the situation. The government was to utilize the Arab request for greater autonomy to manufacture a justification to suppress the autonomists.

The importance of the region was emphasized by the presence of a refinery in the vicinity of much of the nation's oil producing fields. At the time of unrest in the region, Khuzistan was producing over four million barrels of oil a day, more than two-thirds of the entire country's production under the Shah.<sup>417</sup> These factors, coupled with simultaneous ethnic problems in other parts of Iran, were compounded by fears of U.S. or Soviet intervention in Iranian internal affairs.

Arab discontent was fueled by a desire for autonomy in the face of Persian domination. Ethnic Arabs were not only excluded from government and military postings, they also were

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<sup>416</sup>"Spokesman Says Khuzestan Separatist Movement Foiled," Paris AFP in English, FBIS, 0926 GMT 03 Apr 79 (NC030932), April 3, 1979, p. R6.

<sup>417</sup>Kifner, "Ethnic Arabs of Iran's Oil Region in South Worry Regime," New York Times, April 22, 1979, p. 16.

forced to learn Farsi, the only language taught in the local schools. In hopes of some measure of autonomy, the local Arab population began referring to the region by its old name, Arabistan.<sup>418</sup>

On April 26, representatives of a new group, the Arab Political and Cultural Organization (APCO),<sup>419</sup> held a news conference in Tehran and requested autonomy, including "the right to elect officials, revive Arab culture and heritage and have children receive their education in Arabic at Government schools."<sup>420</sup> They emphatically stated that they did not want

control of foreign policy or economic planning, but only a say in regional planning.<sup>421</sup>

In response to the demands of the Arab autonomists, Ayatollah Mohammad Tahir Khaghani emphasized the necessity for the preservation of unity and cohesion to uphold the example of a great political struggle:

If the demands of the Arabs' representatives in Khuzistan are legal and do not harm the government's programs, the government will naturally have to care for their rights.

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<sup>418</sup>Ibid.

<sup>419</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 167.

<sup>420</sup>Ibrahim, "Iran Reports Cease-Fire in Area Where Kurds and Turks Clashed," New York Times, April 27, 1979, p. 13.

<sup>421</sup>Ibid.

If these demands are detrimental to the revolution, we will not support them.<sup>422</sup>

On May 29, Arab dock workers and government forces in Khorramshahr clashed. This was followed on May 30, as violence erupted between Arabs and government forces when Arabs set fire to government buildings, including the main police station, the post office, and a government tobacco factory. These conflicts resulted in a government declaration of a state of emergency.<sup>423</sup>

The fighting soon spread from Khorramshahr to the refinery at Abadan. As government reinforcements were flown to the area, multiple charges of "counterrevolutionary" were leveled at various masked, armed groups in the streets, whose political affiliations could not be determined.<sup>424</sup>

Khaghani, who was also the Arab Sheik of Khuzistan, went to Qom to discuss the matter with Khomeini. Before he left for Qom, Khaghani stated he sought a peaceful solution to the crisis but that the presence of Rear Admiral Mahdani, the Governor General, was "explosive."<sup>425</sup> The outcome of

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<sup>422</sup>"Ayatollah Khaghani Interviewed on Rights of Iranian Arabs," Abadan International Service in Arabic, FBIS, 1630 GMT, 10 May 79 (JN101901), May 11, 1979, P. R2.

<sup>423</sup>"2 Die as Iranian Arabs Clash With Troops in Port," New York Times, May 30, 1979, p. 7.

<sup>424</sup>Kifner, "Iran Arabs Battle Government Troops In Two Oil Centers," New York Times, May 31, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>425</sup>Ibid.



Khaghani's talks with Khomeini was an agreement for limited autonomy.<sup>426</sup>

By May 31, government forces were in control of Khorramshahr after the arrival of reinforcements. They also forced the Arabs to relinquish control of the government buildings in which they had been operating. Mahdani then imposed a curfew<sup>427</sup> in addition to the state of emergency.<sup>428</sup>

The Iranian Government's response to events in Khuzistan provoked sharp criticism from Cairo's Voice of the Arabs on May 31:

To our astonishment we found that the revolution was red and that blood was being shed, rivers and seas of it; suffering was the same and perhaps more; injustice was also the same, if not worse; prisons and detention centers were also the same if not more oppressive. We also found that the imaginary trials--the wonder of the revolutionary committees--were trying and sentencing at the same time without...defense. Then bodies would swing from scaffolds or eyes be blindfolded in front of rifles. One martyr after another would fall in the name of the Islamic Revolution.

Thus Iran is being ruled by the imaginary revolutionary courts and by mob-committees, which in some aspects remind us of the Al-Qadhdhafi committees in Libya and the dreadful Inquisition in the Middle Ages...We cannot shut our eyes to what is taking place against some Muslim minorities there, and in particular the Arab minority which at this moment is being exposed to a clear and deliberate annihilation process planned by the Khomeyni revolutionary committees and implemented by the Iranian

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<sup>426</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 167.

<sup>427</sup>Kifner, "Arab Unrest in Iranian Port Appears to be Suppressed," New York Times, June 1, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>428</sup>Rubin, Paved with Good Intentions, p. 292.

Army, on the clearly defined instructions of the imam. The Iranian Army has killed at least 83 Arabs and has wounded a large number of Arab inhabitants in bloody battles between Arab citizens and Iranian forces in Khuzistan and Abadan, where the oil refineries are. The Iranian authorities have also arrested a large number of Arabs in various Iranian towns.<sup>429</sup>

Khaqhani, in response to events in Khuzistan, stated that the Iranian Government was determined to deprive minorities of their rights while undermining the cause of Islam:

I have told the Government that unless it begins to follow Islamic principles I will leave the country.

We staged a revolution to recreate Islam, but they are now acting against Islam. I do not want to show another distorted face of Islam to the world. I want foreigners, women, Jews, and other minorities to have their rights and guarantees. If the rights of these minorities are endangered, I will leave.<sup>430</sup>

The Iranian Government and APCO reached an agreement on June 6, allowing APCO to continue its activities.<sup>431</sup> The Iranian Government's treatment of Arabs in Khuzistan, who were suffering "the tribulations of death, dispersal, torture and fear," also drew appeals for "sympathy and compassion for the

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<sup>429</sup>"Voice of Arabs Attacking Iran Policy Toward Ethnic Arabs," Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic, FBIS, 1130 GMT, 31 May 79 (LD311505), June 4, 1979, p. D11.

<sup>430</sup>"Arab Ayatollah Says Iran Mistreats All Minorities," New York Times, June 2, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>431</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 167.

Arabs of Arabistan" from clergymen in Karbala and Najaf, two important Shi'ite cities located in Iraq.<sup>432</sup>

More Arabs were arrested on June 13, as the government declared that only citizens "faithful to the revolution" would be allowed to carry arms. In response, Khaghani stated the accord of June 6 was no longer valid and claimed the government had not released Arab prisoners in keeping with the agreement.<sup>433</sup>

In early July of 1979, a new Arab Guerrilla group calling itself "Black Wednesday" caused two oil field explosions in Khuzistan that halted the delivery of oil to the Abadan refinery. The group vowed to continue the attack until it achieved the "legitimate rights of the Arab Iranian population."<sup>434</sup> The Arabs emphasized once again they were not they were not separatists, they were only requesting greater autonomy to teach Arabic language and culture in the schools.<sup>435</sup>

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<sup>432</sup>"Religious Scholar Appeals to Iran on Khuzestan Arabs," Baghdad INA in Arabic, FBIS, 1345 GMT, 29 Jun 79 (JN291455), June 2, 1979, E3.

<sup>433</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 167.

<sup>434</sup>Ibrahim, "Iranian Oil Pipeline Is Cut, Reportedly by Arab Group," New York Times, July 12, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>435</sup>Ibid.

On July 11, five Arab guerrillas engaged Revolutionary Guards on an island in the Shatt al-Arab waterway.<sup>436</sup> They were subsequently captured and brought to Tehran, where they were executed. Simultaneously, Revolutionary Guard personnel occupied Khorramshahr and began arresting suspected Arab subversives, including Ayatollah Khaghani.<sup>437</sup> Khaghani was then taken to Qom and placed under house arrest there.<sup>438</sup>

Three Arabs were executed on July 15 and two more on the next day.<sup>439</sup> More Arabs were arrested and two Arabs were executed for attempting to blow up a oil pipeline, and another one for "acting against the Islamic Republic."<sup>440</sup>

In March of 1980, four oil pipelines were blown up in Khuzistan Province, leading to the execution of four alleged saboteurs on April 17 and another four on July 23.<sup>441</sup>

Saddam Hussein of Iraq attempted to capitalize on Arab discontent while he was planning his invasion of Iran. Saddam envisioned that the Arabs in Khuzistan would greet the Iraqi

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<sup>436</sup>Ibid.

<sup>437</sup>Ibid.

<sup>438</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 167.

<sup>439</sup>Ibid.

<sup>440</sup>Ibid.

<sup>441</sup>Ibid.

soldiers as liberators.<sup>442</sup> Saddam went so far as to have the Iraqi press portray Khuzistan as a province of Iraq, in an attempt to create an excuse for the Arabs in the province to claim allegiance to him.<sup>443</sup> In the end,

Baghdad failed to get significant support from Khuzistan's Arab population. Iraq captured nearly a third of Khuzistan province during the first two months of fighting, but it never gathered any meaningful popular support. Iraq's efforts to encourage Arab separatism...had no meaningful impact on the war during any part of the Iraqi invasion of Khuzistan.<sup>444</sup>

In retrospect, concerns about the loyalty of Arabs in Khuzestan to the central government in Tehran "proved largely unfounded,"<sup>445</sup> although the sizeable presence of Iranian troops in the region probably had as much to do with that as loyalty to Iran over Iraq.

#### E. THE TURKOMANS

The Turkomans are spread over an area east of the Caspian Sea in Iran, Afghanistan, and the former Soviet Union's Turkmen Republic. The Turkomans migrated into Iran during the

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<sup>442</sup>Hiro, Dilip, The Longest War: The Iran-Iraq Military Conflict (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 38.

<sup>443</sup>Ibid., p. 254.

<sup>444</sup>Cordesman and Wagner, Modern War, p. 95.

<sup>445</sup>Drysdale and Blake, The Middle East and North Africa, p. 155.

tenth through the fourteenth centuries from Inner Asia.<sup>446</sup> There are approximately 315,000 Turkomans in Iran.<sup>447</sup> Under the Shah, Turkoman land was taken away from them and awarded to court favorites, whom the Turkomans have historically tended to view as outsiders unjustly given their land.<sup>448</sup>

On March 26, 1979, the Sunni Turkomans gathered in Gonbad-e-Qabus to call for a boycott on the approaching national referendum for an Islamic Republic. During this demonstration, Revolutionary Committee officers tried to arrest someone for selling cigarettes at inflated prices. As they struggled, a Turkoman youth was killed.<sup>449</sup> Consistent with actions taken towards other ethnic groups, government revolutionary forces then opened fire upon the Turkomans, setting off eight days<sup>450</sup> of intense fighting that forced local residents to stay inside their homes for safety.<sup>451</sup>

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<sup>446</sup>Lapidus, Ira, A History of Islamic Societies (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 414.

<sup>447</sup>Delury, World Encyclopedia, p. 534.

<sup>448</sup>Kifner, "Turkomans Battle Iranian Forces in New Outbreak of Tribal Separatism," New York Times, March 28, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>449</sup>Ibid.

<sup>450</sup>Kifner, "Iran Troubled by Traditional Resistance of Its Minorities," New York Times, April 11, 1979, p. 8.

<sup>451</sup>Ibid.

On March 27, the Turkoman Political and Cultural Society issued a statement requesting

concessions involving (i) the redistribution of land owned by supporters of the former Shah; (ii) the right to set up their own police force; (iii) the official recognition of their language; and (iv) representation in the local revolutionary committees dominated by Shia Muslims.<sup>452</sup>

The Turkomans felt so strongly about the land ownership issue that they began to take land back, plow under winter wheat and set farm buildings on fire. In these activities, the Turkomans were encouraged and aided by the Fedayeen-e-Khalq, a Marxist guerrilla group.<sup>453</sup> The landowners appealed to the revolutionary government for aid.<sup>454</sup>

The government, in response, "offered assurances...that the new constitution would pay special attention to the Turkomans."<sup>455</sup> Although the government (in keeping with their established modus operandi) appealed to the "noble and decent people of Gunbad-i-Qawus and their Turkoman brothers,"

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<sup>452</sup>Degenhardt, Revolutionary and Dissident Movements: An International Guide, Second Edition, (Burnt Mill, U.K.: Longman Group UK Limited, 1988), p. 169.

<sup>453</sup>Bakhash, The Reign of the Ayatollahs, p. 69.

<sup>454</sup>Kifner, "Turkomans Battle Iranian Forces in New Outbreak of Tribal Separatism," New York Times, March 28, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>455</sup>Kifner, "Iran Promising Special Attention to Ethnic Demands," New York Times, March 29, 1979, p. 3.

the government's offers to the Turkomans gave no specific measures towards federalism or regional autonomy.<sup>456</sup>

Tehran sent reinforcing troops to the area as fighting continued in spite of government proclamations of a cease-fire. Ayatollah Khomeini offered the Turkomans a warning on March 29

With all sorrow we hear of disturbing news from Gunbad... that certain sections are spreading poison and disunion among our people...with all sorrow I should say that these disruptionists, who are receiving their inspiration from America and are in the guise of leftists, are trying to convert our country into another form, hand-in-hand with the plunderers of the previous regime.<sup>457</sup>

While Khomeini voiced ominous statements on one hand, on the other, government spokesman Amir Entezam's tone was quite different towards the Turkomans when he stated that for "such an obvious matter as the use of local languages, there is no need for marching or demonstrations."<sup>458</sup> He also added that the rights of all persons had been taken into account and that the rights of each individual would be guaranteed, "even more than what the people expect," and that the government was

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<sup>456</sup>Ibid.

<sup>457</sup>Kifner, "Iran Winds Up Campaign to Get Out Vote Today for an Islamic Republic," New York Times, March 30, 1979, p. 6.

<sup>458</sup>"Spokesman Entezam Comments on Unrest," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1030 GMT, 01 Apr 79 (LD011330), April 1, 1979, p. R14.



looking into the Turkoman demands "with utmost sympathy and interest."<sup>459</sup>

In the face of air<sup>460</sup> and ground forces (to include tanks and armored personnel carriers),<sup>461</sup> the Turkomans withdrew on April 3, handing in their weapons at a local mosque.<sup>462</sup> Revolutionary Guards also expelled Turkomans from land they had recently appropriated from non-Turkoman landholders.<sup>463</sup> Once government forces had consolidated power in the region, Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, keeping with the government's approach towards power consolidation, stated "that there would be no settlement between the government and those who demanded self-rule or advocated separatism."<sup>464</sup>

Fighting broke out between Turkoman Fedayeen-e-Khalq followers and Revolutionary Guards at Gonbad-e-Qavus and Gorgan from February 9 - 12, 1980.<sup>465</sup> The fighting was so intense that women, children, and elderly people were

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<sup>459</sup>Ibid.

<sup>460</sup>Kifner, "Turkomans Battle Iranian Forces in New Outbreak of Tribal Separatism," New York Times, March 28, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>461</sup>"Gonbad-E-Kavus Fighting Continues Despite Cease-Fire," London Reuter in English, FBIS, 2036 GMT, 02 Apr 79 (WA022056), April 3, 1979, p. R8.

<sup>462</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 171.

<sup>463</sup>Bakhash, The Reign of the Ayatollahs, p. 199.

<sup>464</sup>Ibid.

<sup>465</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 171.

evacuated from Gonbad-e-Qavus to the countryside.<sup>466</sup> On February 10, Iranian Army tanks were used to storm Gonbad-e-Qavus in an attempt to dislodge combatants.<sup>467</sup>

Abdolali Mozheb, the Governor General of Mazandaran, issued a statement on February 11 in which he blamed "the anti-Islamic and counterrevolutionary movement which has the necessary leadership and which has been able to bring about a tragedy anytime it wanted."<sup>468</sup> The Revolutionary Guards suppressed the Turkomans and several of them crossed the border into the Soviet Union.<sup>469</sup>

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<sup>466</sup>"'Critical' Situation in Gonbad-E-Kavus Reported," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1030 GMT, 09 Feb 80 (LD091156), February 11, 1980, p. 27.

<sup>467</sup>"Tank Attack on Gonbad," Baghdad INA in Arabic, FBIS, 1455 GMT, 10 Feb 80 (JN101501), February 11, 1980, p. 31.

<sup>468</sup>"Disturbances in Gonbad-E-Kavus Reported," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 2030 GMT, 11 Feb 80 (LD112220), February 12, 1980, p. 18.

<sup>469</sup>Degenhardt, Revolutionary and Dissident Movements, p. 170.

#### IV. POLITICAL SUPPRESSION

During the course of events following the Iranian Revolution, the "regime consolidated its power by ruthlessly eliminating rival political parties and political dissent."<sup>470</sup> Faced with the Tudeh Party, the Mujaheddin-e-Khalq and the Fedayeen-e-Khalq, the government chose to suppress rather than accommodate. Under these circumstances, the "ultimate elimination of the Mojahedin, Fadayan, and Tudeh was a foregone conclusion in the ideological framework of an Islamic Iran."<sup>471</sup>

In political cases, warrants for arrests were seldom used. Consequently, there was no judicial determination of whether these detentions were in conformity with Iranian law. Detainees were frequently held for long periods without charge and in some cases were tortured. For political crimes, no access to a lawyer was permitted; such cases were heard, if at all, by the revolutionary judiciary, and bail was not permitted.<sup>472</sup>

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<sup>470</sup>Bakhash, The Reign of the Ayatollahs, p. 247.

<sup>471</sup>Kechichian and Sadri, "National Security," Metz, ed., Iran, p. 247.

<sup>472</sup>Ibid., p. 297.

## A. THE TUDEH PARTY

The Tudeh Party (Party of the Masses) was founded in 1941 after the Allied invasion of Iran.<sup>473</sup> The Tudeh Party is the oldest existing Communist Party in the Middle East and was closely tied to the Soviet Union before it broke up into the Commonwealth of Independent States.<sup>474</sup> Its base in Northern Iran placed it among the Azerbaijanis and Kurds.<sup>475</sup>

The Tudeh supported the autonomous republics of Kurdistan and Azerbaijan<sup>476</sup> and was banned after one of its members was implicated in an unsuccessful assassination attempt on the Shah in 1949, who repressed it until he fell from power in 1979.<sup>477</sup> The Tudeh Party supported Mossadegh and actually warned him beforehand of the coup d'etat that removed him from power.<sup>478</sup>

The Tudeh Party went into exile in East Germany in 1949. It remained there until 1979, where it welcomed the Iranian

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<sup>473</sup>Janke, Peter, Guerrilla and Terrorist Organisations: A World Directory and Bibliography (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1983), p. 233.

<sup>474</sup>Delury, World Encyclopedia, p. 525.

<sup>475</sup>Keddie, Roots of Revolution, p. 115.

<sup>476</sup>Mansfield, A History of the Middle East, p. 149.

<sup>477</sup>Delury, World Encyclopedia, p. 525.

<sup>478</sup>Richard, Yann, "Ayatollah Kashani: Precursor of the Islamic Republic?" translated by Keddie from Keddie, ed., Religion and Politics in Iran, p. 116.

Revolution, praising the "religious side of the anti-shah movement"<sup>479</sup> and promising complete backing for the anti-imperialist goals of the new regime. Once the Tudehs were granted permission to operate once more in Iran, they called for the alliance of socialist forces,<sup>480</sup> and supported Khomeini fully in their rhetoric.<sup>481</sup> This support included voting to replace the monarchy with an Islamic Republic.<sup>482</sup>

In spite of Western fears of Communist encroachment in Iran, the Tudeh had relatively little influence and their office in Tehran was even sacked on June 4, 1979 by an Islamic crowd when Khomeini issued an anti-leftist statement.<sup>483</sup>

Tudeh Secretary General Nureddin Kianuri's attempts to engage in a dialogue with Ayatollah Khomeini were also unsuccessful: "They never reply to our letters or suggestions." Kianuri stated his intention to support the Islamic Revolution as long as it remained "progressive" in spite of being put aside by Khomeini.<sup>484</sup>

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<sup>479</sup>Sick, All Fall Down, p. 108.

<sup>480</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 173.

<sup>481</sup>Bakhash, The Reign of the Ayatollahs, p. 68.

<sup>482</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>483</sup>Rubin, Paved With Good Intentions, p. 292.

<sup>484</sup>Ibrahim, "Unrest Said to Show Rising Opposition to Khomeini," New York Times, August 17, 1979, p. 2.

Tudeh support for Khomeini during the ethnic disturbances of December, 1979 was expressed by Hossein Joudat, the Tudeh leader in Azerbaijan.

We approve of the Imam's line...we are firmly for Ayatollah Khomeini and for sharing through our party his various programs. We believe in unity for Iran on the political front."<sup>485</sup>

In the wake the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the resultant anti-Soviet rhetoric in Iran, the Tudeh Party "consistently and slavishly proclaimed its support for Khomeini at every twist and turn."<sup>486</sup> In spite of this support for Khomeini, the Tudeh Party was undermined by Soviet activities in Afghanistan.<sup>487</sup>

As Iran was preparing to vote on the Majlis (parliament), the Tudeh Party had more than one hundred candidates vying for office. Even though the eventual parliament had a great deal of diversity, the Tudehs won no seats and as a result were not represented politically at all.<sup>488</sup> In the end, Tudeh members were banned from running for the presidency and they

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<sup>485</sup>Gupte, "Left in Iran Split by Stand Over Khomeini," New York Times, December 6, 1979, p. 18.

<sup>486</sup>Mortimer, Faith and Power, p. 375.

<sup>487</sup>Atkin, Muriel, "The Islamic Republic and the Soviet Union," Keddie and Hooglund, Eric, eds., The Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Republic, Second Edition (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1986), p. 200.

<sup>488</sup>Wright, In the Name of God, pp. 90-1.

never obtained a seat in parliament in subsequent elections.<sup>489</sup>

Despite their services to the Revolution and their mass following, especially in Tehran and the northern provinces, at no time were the...Tudeh allowed to play a role in the government."<sup>490</sup>

The Soviet Union gave the Tudeh Party advance warning of the Iraqi invasion of Iran. The Tudeh Party in turn provided this information to the Iranian government, who responded by sending armored units to the Soviet-Iranian border,<sup>491</sup> perhaps because the Tudehs had at one time "called for the complete disbanding" of the regular Iranian armed forces.<sup>492</sup>

In June of 1981, The Tudeh Party newspaper was banned.<sup>493</sup> The Tudeh was allowed to function as long as it showed itself supportive of the Islamic Republic.<sup>494</sup> The Tudeh publicly supported the Iranian Government in the war against Iraq as "long as hostilities were being conducted on Iranian soil."<sup>495</sup> This stance in part reflected the interests of

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<sup>489</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>490</sup>Keddie, Roots of Revolution, p. 259.

<sup>491</sup>Mortimer, Faith and Power, p. 369.

<sup>492</sup>Chubin and Tripp, Iran and Iraq at War, p. 35.

<sup>493</sup>Atkin, "The Islamic Republic and the Soviet Union," Keddie and Hooglund, eds., The Iranian Republic and the Islamic Revolution, p. 197.

<sup>494</sup>Chubin and Tripp, Iran and Iraq at War, p. 221.

<sup>495</sup>Hiro, The Longest War, p. 101.

Moscow, who "did not want an Iranian invasion of Iraq to provide the US with an excuse to intervene militarily in the Gulf, or to gain access to bases in the name of defending its regional allies."<sup>496</sup> In fact, the Tudeh Party publicly "supported the government until it was crushed by massive arrests."<sup>497</sup>

On May 4, 1982, the government banned and then dissolved the Tudeh Party in retaliation for Soviet arms support to Saddam Hussein. These arms included surface-to-surface missiles that were used to attack the Iranian city of Dezful.<sup>498</sup>

Another event that was a key factor in the downfall of Tudeh fortunes was the defection to Britain of a KGB agent, Vladimir Kuzichkin,<sup>499</sup> operating under the guise of a Soviet diplomat while stationed in Tehran.<sup>500</sup> Kuzichkin was officially a vice-consul at the Soviet Embassy with a background in Oriental Studies from Moscow University.<sup>501</sup> He gave the British Intelligence debriefers the names of Soviet spies and

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<sup>496</sup>Chubin and Tripp, Iran and Iraq at War, p. 222.

<sup>497</sup>Rubin, "The State of U.S.-Iran Relations," Rosen, ed., Iran Since the Revolution, p. 104.

<sup>498</sup>Hiro, The Longest War, p. 101.

<sup>499</sup>Chubin and Tripp, Iran and Iraq at War, p. 210.

<sup>500</sup>Wright, In the Name of God, p. 124.

<sup>501</sup>Stanhope, "Secret service 'wanted spy to stay in Tehran,'" Times, October 25, 1982, p. 24.



the Iranian agents under their control. This list was in turn passed on to the Americans, who eventually provided it to Tehran in an attempt to curry favor with the Iranians.<sup>502</sup>

Government authorities arrested Tudeh leader Nureddin Kianuri,<sup>503</sup> and party theoretician Eshan Tabari,<sup>504</sup> as well as 1500 party members, including those serving in the military.<sup>505</sup>

The government also ordered all Tudeh Party members at large to turn themselves in to the authorities.<sup>506</sup> The commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, Mohsen Reza'i, then made a public appeal: "We invite all members of this defunct and filthy Tudeh Party to identify themselves immediately to the Corps' centers, to give their names."<sup>507</sup> Reza'i's rhetoric was indicative of the treatment Tudeh members were to receive at the government's hands.

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<sup>502</sup>Ibid.

<sup>503</sup>Herrmann, "The Role of Iran in Soviet Perceptions and Policy, 1946-1988," Keddie and Gasiorowski, eds., Neither East Nor West, p. 82.

<sup>504</sup>Degenhardt, Revolutionary and Dissident Movements, p. 166.

<sup>505</sup>Hiro, The Longest War, p. 101.

<sup>506</sup>Hooglund, "Iran 1980-85: Political and Economic Trends," Keddie and Hooglund, eds., The Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Republic, p. 22.

<sup>507</sup>"Guards Commander Comments on Tudeh Arrests," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1030 GMT, 02 May 83 (LD021211), May 3, 1983, p. 15.

Many Tudeh Party members, to include Kianuri and Tabari,<sup>508</sup> were then shown on television confessing that they were spies for the Soviet Union.<sup>509</sup> Kianuri, in what was to become the typical model of torture-induced public profession of guilt for Tudeh Party members, stated he had been in contact with Soviet agents since 1945 and "Our violations mainly consisted of the delivery of top-secret military and political documents to our bosses at the Russian embassy."<sup>510</sup> Kianuri also stated that he had engaged in damaging practices "which deserve the most severe punitive actions that the Islamic Republic may decide to mete out,"<sup>511</sup> attesting to the effectiveness of the torture he had endured. In his interview

Kianuri said his party was guilty of six important errors: remaining dependent on the Soviet Union and engaging in espionage on its behalf; illegally retaining secret arms caches; maintaining a secret political organization in contravention of official rulings that such groups should be dissolved; establishing a secret group of officers which became an agency for collecting information for dispatch to the USSR; infiltrating the administration; and arranging illegal departures from the country. Kianuri expressed "chagrin and shame" over his deeds against Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeyni and urged young Tudeh members to avoid participating in any leftist infiltration of Iran

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<sup>508</sup>Delury, World Encyclopedia, p. 527.

<sup>509</sup>Hooglund, "Iran 1980-85," Keddie and Hooglund, eds., The Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Republic, p. 22.

<sup>510</sup>"Iran-Iraq prisoner exchange completed," Times, May 2, 1983, p. 5.

<sup>511</sup>"Communist Leader's Confession," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1150 GMT, 01 May 83 (LD011522), May 2, 1983, p. ii.

as this means "affiliation with foreigners and aliens."<sup>512</sup>

The confessions tended to be very explicit in the nature of espionage activities carried out and were generally prompted by specific, leading questions designed to point out the guilt of the person confessing.<sup>513</sup>

The admissions of guilt were "obtained under horrifying conditions and may have reflected the suspicions and propaganda needs of the clerical leaders in Iran far more than the actual intentions of the Tudeh."<sup>514</sup> The Tudeh bore the brunt of the perception among Khomeini supporters that "any form of Marxism came to be seen as a potential threat against the revolution."<sup>515</sup>

Ten military members of the Tudeh Party were charged with pro-Soviet espionage and executed in February of 1984.<sup>516</sup> The former Iranian navy commander, Captain Bahram Afzali was one of the ten military members executed.<sup>517</sup> Revolutionary

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<sup>512</sup>Ibid.

<sup>513</sup>Ibid., questions were worded precisely and were self-incriminatory in nature, "explain the espionage cases," "tell us of your treason," and other questions in this vein.

<sup>514</sup>Herrmann, "The Role of Iran in Soviet Perceptions and Policy, 1946-1988," Keddie and Gasiorowski, eds., Neither East Nor West, p. 78.

<sup>515</sup>Cordesman and Wagner, Modern War, p. 142.

<sup>516</sup>Hiro, The Longest War, p. 101.

<sup>517</sup>Degenhardt, Revolutionary and Dissident Movements, p. 166.

Guards Commander Mohsen Reza'i explained that the Tudehs were not executed immediately because the Iranian government was in no hurry to execute them. He also stated that they still had a great deal to confess and added that all those who had confessed had signed their own death warrants by so doing.<sup>518</sup>

The Iranian Government's suppression of the Tudeh Party led to a deterioration of relations between Tehran and Moscow.<sup>519</sup>

The Soviet Union disapproved of the Iranian Government's repression of the Tudeh and also the radio broadcasts of Islamic propaganda beamed into the Central Asian Soviet republics, viewing them as subversive appeals directed at Soviet Muslims to encourage them to revolt.<sup>520</sup>

In August of 1982 the Iranian media publicly announced that the Tudehs were anti-revolutionary.<sup>521</sup> This official demonization, on the heels of with the government purges caused the party to go into a period of hibernation that still persists.<sup>522</sup>

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<sup>518</sup>"Iran," Daily Report, in Persian, FBIS, May 11, 1983.

<sup>519</sup>Atkin, "The Islamic Republic and the Soviet Union," Keddie and Hooglund, eds., The Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Republic, p. 192.

<sup>520</sup>Hiro, The Longest War, p. 263.

<sup>521</sup>Cordesman and Wagner, Modern War, p. 156.

<sup>522</sup>Delury, World Encyclopedia, p. 527.

## B. THE MUJAHEDDIN-E-KHALQ

The Mujaheddin-e-Khalq was "a militant splinter group of the Iran Liberation Movement,"<sup>523</sup> who began a campaign of armed struggle against the Shah in 1971.<sup>524</sup> They were primarily urban based and came from well-educated backgrounds.<sup>525</sup> As a result of their agitations against the Pahlavi government, many Mujaheddin members were incarcerated and executed.<sup>526</sup> This crippled the organization for the duration of the Shah's regime. After the Shah departed Iran, the Mujaheddin cooperated with the Fedayeen-e-Khalq in February of 1979 to oversee the collection of arms confiscated from the Shah's supporters.<sup>527</sup>

The Mujaheddin initially supported Khomeini during the early stages of the Iranian Revolution, battling the Shah's forces more effectively than the Ayatollah's supporters.<sup>528</sup> The Mujaheddin formed an important part of the anti-Pahlavi coalition and advocated a socialist program as well as "the rights of all who fought the Shah, including Marxists, to

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<sup>523</sup>Janke, Guerilla and Terrorist Organisations, p. 232.

<sup>524</sup>Ibid.

<sup>525</sup>Ibid.

<sup>526</sup>Mortimer, Faith and Power, p. 343.

<sup>527</sup>Degenhardt, Revolutionary and Dissident Movements, p. 165.

<sup>528</sup>Ibrahim, "Unrest Said to Show Rising Opposition to Khomeini," New York Times, August 17, 1979, p. 2.

express their views."<sup>529</sup> Additionally, they supported the right of national minorities to have autonomy but not secession.<sup>530</sup>

In April of 1979, the Mujaheddin sided with Ayatollah Taleghani in his theological dispute with Khomeini over differing interpretations of Koranic exegesis and stated a willingness to put its armed forces, estimated at between 5,000 to 10,000 men, under his command.<sup>531</sup> By advocating a position not approved by Khomeini, they were to become the "main target group" of a wave of persecution that was to include mass arrests and executions.<sup>532</sup>

On August 13, Mujaheddin offices in Tehran were looted by militant supporters of Khomeini, in retaliation for leftist criticism of the Ayatollah's religious policies.<sup>533</sup> Following the attacks, the Mujaheddin staged a sit-in protest and vigil outside their headquarters to prevent any further violence. During the vigil, they were surrounded by heavily

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<sup>529</sup>Ibid.

<sup>530</sup>Mortimer, Faith and Power, p. 344.

<sup>531</sup>Ibrahim, "An Ayatollah Who Must Be Reckoned With," New York Times, April 19, 1979, p. 9.

<sup>532</sup>Keddie and Cole, "Introduction," Cole and Keddie, Shi'ism and Social Protest, p. 25.

<sup>533</sup>"Khomeini's Backers Raid Headquarters of Iranian Leftists," New York Times, August 14, 1979, p. 1.

armed Revolutionary Guards who sought to intimidate them.<sup>534</sup> In the wake of the anti-leftist violence, Khomeini denounced the Mujaheddin as "counterrevolutionary," leading to their alignment with other underground organizations.<sup>535</sup> This was a prelude to "mass government executions" that targeted the Mujaheddin as subversive.<sup>536</sup>

In response to the Mujaheddin boycott of the constitutional referendum, Khomeini declared that Mujaheddin candidate Masoud Rajavi could not run as a candidate in the upcoming presidential election.<sup>537</sup> As a result, Mujaheddin candidates won no seats in the parliamentary elections of the Spring of 1980.<sup>538</sup> By emphasizing the "counterrevolutionary" nature of the Mujaheddin and denying them political representation, the government further ostracized them in the eyes of Iranian society.

In June of 1981, Mujaheddin backers of Iranian President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr repeatedly clashed with pro-government

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<sup>534</sup>"Guerrillas Hold Quiet Vigil at Tehran Headquarters," New York Times, August 16, 1979, p. 5.

<sup>535</sup>Gupte, "Left in Iran Split by Stand Over Khomeini," New York Times, December 6, 1979, p. 18.

<sup>536</sup>Keddie, "Introduction," Keddie, ed., Religion and Politics in Iran, p. 13.

<sup>537</sup>Wright, In the Name of God, p. 89.

<sup>538</sup>Bakhash, "Historical Setting," Metz, ed., Iran, p. 56.

Hezbollah factions backed by Revolutionary Guards.<sup>539</sup> When Khomeini dismissed Bani-Sadr, the Mujaheddin took to the streets to protest the action, marking their official break with the government.<sup>540</sup> Later that month, six Mujaheddin members were executed by a firing squad at Tehran's Evin Prison and many more were arrested for questioning by authorities.<sup>541</sup> In another demonstration, twenty young girls attempting to shield their fellow Mujaheddin members were arrested and promptly executed by the Revolutionary Guards.<sup>542</sup>

Fifty Mujaheddin members were arrested by Iranian authorities on June 30 and blamed for bombing the Islamic Republican Party (IRP) headquarters on June 28.<sup>543</sup> The bomb killed 72 people,<sup>544</sup> including 27 Majlis Deputies.<sup>545</sup> The

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<sup>539</sup>Allaway, "Bani-Sadr loses the battle for Tehran's streets," Times, June 10, 1981, p. 8.

<sup>540</sup>Delury, World Encyclopedia, p. 521.

<sup>541</sup>Allaway, "Iranians keep up search for missing President," Times, June 24, 1981, p. 4.

<sup>542</sup>Zabih, "The Non-Communist Left in Iran: The Case of the Mujahidin," Chelkowski and Pranger, eds., Ideology and Power in the Middle East, p. 250.

<sup>543</sup>"50 held for Tehran parliament plot," Times, July 2, 1981, p. 6.

<sup>544</sup>Degenhardt, Revolutionary and Dissident Movements, p. 165.

<sup>545</sup>"50 held for Tehran parliament plot," Times, July 2, 1981, p. 6.



Iranian Government swiftly executed 17 "radicals" and arrested 50 more.<sup>546</sup> In the wake of the IRP bombing, the "executions became far more widespread and indiscriminate thereafter, although no responsibility for the bombing was proven."<sup>547</sup> In spite of the lack of proof, the mullahs continued to publicly blame the Mujaheddin.<sup>548</sup>

Mujaheddin members and government forces fought in a central Tehran apartment on July 5, resulting in the death of three guerrillas. On the same day, seven Mujaheddin members were executed for anti-government activities.<sup>549</sup>

The next day, 27 people, many of them Mujaheddin supporters, were executed for being "enemies of Islam."<sup>550</sup> Having evolved from counterrevolutionaries to "enemies of Islam," the Mujaheddin were then accused of planning to destroy the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Parliament).<sup>551</sup> The executions continued on July 7 when nine people were put to

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<sup>546</sup>Ashford, Nicholas, "Court allows transfer of Iranian assets," Times, July 3, 1981, p. 6.

<sup>547</sup>Keddie, "Introduction," Keddie, Religion and Politics in Iran, p. 13.

<sup>548</sup>Wright, In the Name of God, p. 98.

<sup>549</sup>"Guerrillas killed in Iran clash," Times, July 6, 1981, p. 5.

<sup>550</sup>"Iran firing squads busy as gunmen murder governor," Times, July 7, 1981, p. 7.

<sup>551</sup>Ibid.

death for "assault, street fighting and conspiring against the Islamic Revolution."<sup>552</sup>

On July 10, three more Mujaheddin supporters were executed for "creating clashes, insulting the authorities, theft and subversive relations with the hypocrites" (hypocrites became the government's official term for referring to the Mujaheddin and was a play on words from the term for hypocrite, "Monafeqin").<sup>553</sup> As the government escalated the rhetoric, it also continued to "ruthlessly hunt down and execute any Mujahideen supporters they could find."<sup>554</sup>

On July 12, a Tehran businessman, Ahmad Javaheriyan, was executed for providing financial support to the Mujaheddin. The same day, 27 other "counterrevolutionaries," most of them Mujaheddin or Fedayeen, were also executed as part of a clean-up campaign following the June 28 bombing of the Parliament in Tehran.<sup>555</sup>

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<sup>552</sup>"Reuters Shut in Iran," Times, July 8, 1981, p. 32.

<sup>553</sup>"Three Executed in Iran," Times, July 11, 1981, p. 4. The Islamic Republic's utilization of the term "Monafeqin" as a description of those who were theologically impure and therefore a threat to the regime is examined in an essay by Haggay Ram entitled "Crushing the Opposition: Adversaries of the Islamic Republic of Iran," from The Middle East Journal, Vol. 46, No. 3 (Summer 1992), pp. 428-439. This essay looks at the evolution of rhetoric as a demonization tool of the regime to legitimize theologically its repression of its enemies.

<sup>554</sup>Cordesman and Wagner, Modern War, p. 117.

<sup>555</sup>"Tehran business leaders executed by firing squads," Times, July 14, 1981, p. 5.

The 18 month repression became known as the "reign of terror" and led to a decrease in overall freedom for Iranians.<sup>556</sup> As a special target of the government, the Mujaheddin was made the object of a well publicized, systematic campaign to the point that

the regime publicized the death sentences, leaving the bodies on public gallows - something not seen in Iran since the 1910s, - and proudly announcing the execution of whole families, including teenage daughters and 60 year old grandmothers.<sup>557</sup>

The anti-leftist campaign continued as firing squads executed four Mujaheddin members and supporters on July 15. They were charged with "armed rebellion against the Islamic Republic and waging war on God,"<sup>558</sup> a theological justification for political activity. Utilizing political rhetoric, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Mousavi stated the Mujaheddin were attempting to create "confusion and unrest" in Iran prior to the country's upcoming presidential elections.<sup>559</sup>

Government forces then staged raids on Mujaheddin hideouts and "safe houses" throughout Iran. As a result, 120 leftists

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<sup>556</sup>Wright, In the Name of God, p. 99.

<sup>557</sup>Abrahamian, Ervand, The Iranian Mojahedin (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 220.

<sup>558</sup>"Iran sends four more to firing squads," Times, July 16, 1981, p. 7.

<sup>559</sup>Ibid.

were arrested and 11 executed on July 16.<sup>560</sup> Another man accused of being a Mujaheddin member was executed on July 19.<sup>561</sup>

As the Iranian presidential and parliamentary by-elections approached, the executions continued. On July 22, nine Mujaheddin members were put to death in Evin Prison for "waging war against God."<sup>562</sup> A government official described the Mujaheddin as "the corrupt of the earth" due to their status as enemies of the Islamic Revolution.<sup>563</sup>

On July 27, Muhammad Reza Saadati, a Mujaheddin leader, and 15 other Mujaheddin members were executed by a firing squad.<sup>564</sup> Saadati had been imprisoned in the wake of the Iranian Revolution on charges of spying for the Soviet Union and was accused of murdering the governor of the by now infamous Evin Prison in Tehran.<sup>565</sup>

The Iranian Government executed 12 Mujaheddin members on August 3 along with 15 other opponents of the regime. The

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<sup>560</sup>"Iran rounds up 120 in left-wing strongholds," Times, July 17, 1981, p. 4.

<sup>561</sup>"Ten executed by Iranians," Times, July 20, 1981, p. 4.

<sup>562</sup>"Murder and executions precede poll in Iran," Times, July 24, 1981, p. 6.

<sup>563</sup>Ibid.

<sup>564</sup>"Shah's family pay respects," Times, July 28, 1981, p. 10.

<sup>565</sup>Ibid.

Mujaheddin were charged with being "counterrevolutionaries."<sup>566</sup> At the same time, a government spokesman warned France that Iran would "react appropriately" if France became a center for "counterrevolutionaries." This remark was made in reference to the presence in Paris of Mujaheddin leader Masoud Rajavi with former President Bani-Sadr.<sup>567</sup>

Ayatollah Khomeini offered on August 10 to allow Rajavi to return to Iran under certain conditions

Even now, all those who have gone abroad and want to overthrow the regime in Iran can come back to the country if they repent. If they want to serve their country, they can come back and serve. No one will do anything to them.<sup>568</sup>

Khomeini, while extending an offer of clemency on one hand, then referred to Rajavi as a "heretic."<sup>569</sup>

On August 13, the Iranian Government announced a new anti-terror campaign which included a wider range of offenses punishable by death. Revolutionary Prosecutor General Ali Ghoddusi proclaimed that all persons assisting members of underground "seditionist groups," as well as those taking part

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<sup>566</sup>"27 opponents of the regime executed in Iran," Times, August 5, 1981, p. 5.

<sup>567</sup>Ibid.

<sup>568</sup>"Khomeini's offer to repentant exiles," Times, August 11, 1981, p. 5.

<sup>569</sup>Ibid.

in direct attacks upon the regime would face a firing squad.<sup>570</sup>

Simultaneously, the government executed 15 persons, among them a number of Mujaheddin members. Islamic Revolutionary Guards also arrested approximately 250 leftists throughout Iran, including a large number of Mujaheddin members and supporters, to include 11 teenage girls.<sup>571</sup> The teenage girls were executed because they were defined by an Islamic judge as "mature."<sup>572</sup>

The Iranian news agency Pars announced that 38 Mujaheddin sympathizers were executed on August 24. Government officials then announced on August 25 that over 700 guerrillas had been recently rooted out from their safehouses and arrested as part of an anti-counterrevolutionary campaign.<sup>573</sup>

Government forces continued the anti-leftist campaign by executing 21 people in Northern Iran on August 25, many of them Mujaheddin. Revolutionary Guards also carried out

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<sup>570</sup>Allaway, "Tehran extends death penalty in anti-terror drive," Times, August 14, 1981, p. 5.

<sup>571</sup>Ibid.

<sup>572</sup>Mortimer, Faith and Power, p. 352.

<sup>573</sup>"Iran Raids On Rebel Hideouts," Times, August 26, 1981, p. 5.

simultaneous raids and arrests on Mujaheddin hideouts in Qom.<sup>574</sup>

Mujaheddin members were among 37 people executed at Tehran's Evin Prison On September 1 and the Iranian Government announced that nine others had been executed at unspecified locations in Iran at the same time.<sup>575</sup> The executions were part of a campaign of reprisals for a bombing on August 30, for which the Iranian Government blamed the Mujaheddin. Over 60 government officials were later arrested in 1986 for causing the explosion.<sup>576</sup> In the midst of the battles between the Mujaheddin and government forces, Hashemi Rafsanjani stated in September of 1982 that the authorities had seized "enough safe houses to make up a city" and "enough arms to equip several divisions."<sup>577</sup>

The Mujaheddin then attempted to wage a series of small demonstrations similar to those which preceded the downfall of the Shah. Small groups of armed protesters composed of girls and young men gathered and chanted anti-Khomeini slogans.

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<sup>574</sup>Allaway, "Unwarlike face of conflict in the Gulf," Times, August 27, 1981, p. 6.

<sup>575</sup>Allaway, "Khomeini's man wins backing of Majlis," Times, September 3, 1981, p. 6.

<sup>576</sup>Schahgaldian, The Iranian Military Under the Islamic Republic, p. 33.

<sup>577</sup>Iran Times, September 3, 1982, cited in Bakhash, The Reign of the Ayatollahs, p. 222.

When the Revolutionary Guards or police arrived, the demonstrators rapidly broke up and disappeared down side streets.<sup>578</sup>

As the authorities began to respond and pursue demonstrators, fighting began to break out during successive protests. On September 9, fighting occurred in five different areas of Tehran as the Mujaheddin carried out their "lightning street protests" all over the city.<sup>579</sup> The violence that was typical of the reign of terror continued throughout the month of September and at "the height of the confrontation, an average of 50 persons a day were executed; on several days...the total number executed throughout the country exceeded 100."<sup>580</sup>

In one instance, a heavy gunfire exchange took place between Mujaheddin supporters and Revolutionary Guards along the main thoroughfare of Tehran. In response, Khomeini threatened political reprisals against the Mujaheddin and their supporters with theological reasoning by stating that when the Prophet Muhammad "failed to improve the people with

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<sup>578</sup>Allaway, "Terrorists move on to streets of Tehran," Times, September 9, 1981, p. 6.

<sup>579</sup>Allaway, "Two killed in Tehran street gunfights," Times, September 10, 1981, p. 6.

<sup>580</sup>Hooglund, "Government and Politics," Metz, ed., Iran, p. 208.



advice, he hit them on the head with a sword until he made them human beings."<sup>581</sup>

Tehran radio reported on September 25 that the government had executed 29 government opponents for "possession of weapons, participation in armed demonstrations and terrorism." The government referred to the executed persons as belonging to "pro-American groups."<sup>582</sup>

From exile in Paris, Rajavi stated on September 25 that although he spent seven years in solitary confinement under the Shah, the reign of Ayatollah Khomeini was more repressive and reactionary than "anything Iran had experienced before."<sup>583</sup> Rajavi claimed that the regime was also executing "10 and 12 year old girls...for demonstrating in the street," and that the numbers of Mujaheddin executed by the government were much higher than what the regime was publicizing.<sup>584</sup> He pointed out that the government's recent claim of executing 200 persons in one day, to include 179 Mujaheddin, was a deflated figure.<sup>585</sup>

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<sup>581</sup>Ibid.

<sup>582</sup>"Pilgrims in clash with Saudi police," Times, September 25, 1981, p. 8.

<sup>583</sup>Mortimer, "Iran resistance leader asks for British support," Times, September 26, 1981, p. 3.

<sup>584</sup>Ibid.

<sup>585</sup>Ibid.

The Times reported on September 29 that government firing squads executed 110 persons on September 28. Of that 110, at least 53 were Mujaheddin members and supporters. The Times wrote that the most recent spate of executions brought the "officially acknowledged" total to at least 1,597 since the beginning of the crackdown on June 20.<sup>586</sup>

The next day, the Iranian Government announced that it had executed 43 more "opponents of the regime."<sup>587</sup> Throughout the October 2 - 4 weekend, Iranian authorities announced 66 Mujaheddin members, including five women, were executed by firing squads in seven Iranian towns. All of those put to death were charged with supporting armed struggle against the Khomeini Regime.<sup>588</sup>

The government executed 61 more people, eight of them women, at Tehran's Evin Prison on October 5. The Iranian Revolutionary Prosecutor's Office announced the executed people were Mujaheddin sympathizers or "hypocrites" who had engaged in "rebellion against the Islamic Republic."<sup>589</sup>

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<sup>586</sup>Joseph, Ralph, "Another 110 Shot In Iran," Times, September 29, 1981, p. 1.

<sup>587</sup>"More Violent Deaths In Iran," Times, September 30, 1981, p. 32.

<sup>588</sup>"Mullah power triumphs in Iran poll," Times, October 5, 1981, p. 9.

<sup>589</sup>"Eight women among 61 executed in Tehran," Times, October 6, 1981, p. 9.

Sporadic fighting took place in various Iranian cities on October 6 as the violence continued. In Tehran, Revolutionary Guards and Hezbollah partisans battled with the Mujaheddin for half an hour, resulting in the arrest of six guerrillas.<sup>590</sup> Twenty Mujaheddin members and supporters were arrested during a safehouse raid by Revolutionary Guards in two unspecified cities.<sup>591</sup> Government authorities arrested an unknown number of guerrillas in a raid in Khoramabad, which netted an arms and ammunition cache.<sup>592</sup>

Tehran radio proclaimed on October 12 that 82 rebels were executed on October 10, bringing the number of officially acknowledged executions since June 22 to over 1,700.<sup>593</sup> The Mujaheddin office in Paris alleged that the government had recently removed 100 children wounded in demonstrations from their hospital beds and executed them in Tehran's Evin Prison.<sup>594</sup>

The Iranian Government announced on October 13 that it had executed 22 more Mujaheddin rebels, bringing the total since

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<sup>590</sup> "Tehran gunfight between guards and Mujahedin," Times, October 7, 1981, p. 4.

<sup>591</sup> Ibid.

<sup>592</sup> Ibid.

<sup>593</sup> "100 children executed in Iran, claim Mujaheddin," Times, October 12, 1981, p. 4.

<sup>594</sup> Ibid.

June 22 to more than 1,800 persons. This also brought the total of persons known to have been executed to almost 3,400 according to Amnesty International.<sup>595</sup>

The Iranian Government executed 18 Mujaheddin insurgents during late December 1981 and early January 1982.<sup>596</sup> In early January, Mujaheddin leader Masoud Rajavi stated from Paris that the Iranian Government had executed over 8,000 people in the previous six months, but had announced less than half that number for fear of "the condemnation of national and world opinion."<sup>597</sup> The eventual number of Mujaheddin members and supporters executed was estimated to exceed 7,500.<sup>598</sup> The government announced the execution of eight more Mujaheddin guerrillas on January 6, 1982, for "armed rebellion."<sup>599</sup>

In February, the Iranian Government claimed that it had killed Mujaheddin commander Musa Khiabani at a guerrilla hideout in North Tehran. Khiabani was alleged to have been

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<sup>595</sup>"Guerrilla deaths take Iran execution toll to 3,350," Times, October 14, 1981, p. 10.

<sup>596</sup>"Iran executes 18 insurgents," Times, January 4, 1982, p. 4.

<sup>597</sup>"Executed Iranians 'had tongues pulled out,'" Times, January 7, 1982, p. 4.

<sup>598</sup>Hooglund, "Government and Politics," Metz, ed., Iran, p. 216.

<sup>599</sup>"Executed Iranians 'had tongues pulled out,'" Times, January 7, 1982, p. 4.

one of 12 Mujaheddin members killed, including his wife, and the wife of Rajavi, and other important guerrilla leaders.<sup>600</sup>

Mujaheddin activities, having been dealt a "near-fatal blow,"<sup>601</sup> abated for the next few weeks in the wake of Khiabani's death. In April, Minister of Islamic Guidance Hojatoleslam Abdel Majid Moadikhah refused to comment on a Times report that claimed that over 8,000 people, including many Mujaheddin, had been executed in the past few months. He did say that the Mujaheddin were responsible for "hideous crimes worse than terrorism anywhere else."<sup>602</sup>

The Iranian Government then began another onslaught to "stamp out" the Mujaheddin "by using unrestrained force and propaganda."<sup>603</sup> The Mujaheddin suffered a serious blow in early May when Iranian security forces and Revolutionary Guards killed and arrested more than 50 Mujaheddin members and supporters. The government security forces also destroyed over ten guerrilla bases, damaging Mujaheddin operational, administrative, and logistics capabilities.<sup>604</sup> Among the

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<sup>600</sup>"Iranian guerrilla commander 'shot and killed,'" Times, February 9, 1982, p. 1.

<sup>601</sup>Hiro, The Longest War, p. 99.

<sup>602</sup>Owen, Richard, "Media in West attacked for 'lies,'" Times, April 16, 1982, p. 5.

<sup>603</sup>Hiro, The Longest War, p. 100.

<sup>604</sup>"Mujahedin suffer 'heavy blows' in Tehran raids,'" Times, May 4, 1982, p. 5.

captured materials were documents identifying other Mujaheddin members and supporters. The arrests occurred at the end of an eight hour battle between Revolutionary Guards and guerrillas.<sup>605</sup>

The anti-guerrilla campaign was part of a "massive hunt for the Mujahideen"<sup>606</sup> that was to result in "some 5,000-6,000 people...killed or executed."<sup>607</sup> The violence continued in June when eleven Mujaheddin members were executed in Bandar Abbas. In a unique conglomeration of psychological and theological intimidation, one of them was hung in the public square "to enable others to learn a lesson from such unholy people."<sup>608</sup> Five more Mujaheddin were executed in early July for "armed rebellion and opposition to the Iranian regime."<sup>609</sup>

The Iranian Government launched an official propaganda campaign on August 16 against the "interior terrorism of hypocrites," again utilizing the regime's sanctioned parlance

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<sup>605</sup>Ibid.

<sup>606</sup>Cordesman and Wagner, Modern War, p. 155.

<sup>607</sup>Ibid.

<sup>608</sup>"Public hanging," Times, June 3, 1982, p. 7.

<sup>609</sup>Teimourian, "Iran's hawks pressing for full invasion," Times, July 12, 1982, p. 4.

to describe the Mujaheddin.<sup>610</sup> On August 18, the Mujaheddin office in Paris issued a communique stating that the Islamic Republic of Iran had executed "hundreds of political prisoners" from August 15 through August 17.<sup>611</sup>

In December, Amnesty International issued a statement claiming that over 3,000 executions had been carried out by the Iranian Government since Bani-Sadr's departure. The Mujaheddin claimed that the figure was actually closer to 7,000.<sup>612</sup>

Mujaheddin military commander Mehran Asdaghi was hung at Tehran's Evin Prison on January 12, 1985. The authorities claimed Asdaghi had confessed to torturing people with cables, boiling water and hot irons before killing them.<sup>613</sup> Four more Mujaheddin guerrillas were hung in public in Tabriz in February after confessing and being tried for killing local shopkeepers.<sup>614</sup>

In October of 1985, the Mujaheddin called a news conference in Paris to offer to the public the testimonies of two

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<sup>610</sup>"70 Iranian officers reported shot after Qotbzadeh plot," Times, August 17, 1982, p. 6.

<sup>611</sup>Teimourian, "Iran Executions," Times, August 19, 1982, p. 4.

<sup>612</sup>Wright, In the Name of God, p. 106.

<sup>613</sup>"Khomeini approves suicide hit squad," Times, January 16, 1985, p. 6.

<sup>614</sup>"Four guerrillas hanged in public," Times, February 25, 1985, p. 5.

Mujaheddin members mistreated by the Iranian Government. One of the former prisoners, Mojgan Homayounfar, stated the Revolutionary Guards had cut off one of her feet with swords and dumped her into the street to die. After she had been admitted to a hospital, they had arrested her again, given her a summary trial, and incarcerated her.<sup>615</sup> She alleged to have witnessed mass torture and executions and the detention of people in cages "where you could only crouch."<sup>616</sup> Another former prisoner, Behzad Naziri, stated he had been whipped for "days at a time" on the soles of his feet.<sup>617</sup>

After the end of the Iran-Iraq War and the death of Khomeini, the Mujaheddin were once again the target of government repression. In retaliation for fighting alongside<sup>618</sup> Iraq during the war, more Mujaheddin were executed.<sup>619</sup>

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<sup>615</sup>"Horrors of Iran's jails described," Times, November 1, 1985, p. 10.

<sup>616</sup>Ibid.

<sup>617</sup>Ibid.

<sup>618</sup>The Iran-Iraq War was detrimental to the interests of the Mujaheddin due to the organization's support of and alignment with Iraq. By siding with the enemy (Iraq), the Mujaheddin became a frequent target of Iranian governmental diatribe. As a result, the central government in Tehran had a convenient excuse to demonize the Mujaheddin by painting the organization as un-Iranian (in addition to being un-Islamic hypocrites). In this instance, the Mujaheddin damaged their chances of attaining political and cultural credibility. By raiding Iran from Iraqi soil, they came to be identified as allies of Saddam Hussein, thereby bestowing a certain legitimacy upon the Iranian government's credibility in the hearts and minds of Iranians engaged in the struggle against the invader.



Those who were not executed were sent to reeducation camps "very similar to those set up by the Vietnamese after the fall of South Vietnam, or in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge."<sup>620</sup> By this time, "the group's activities were considerably reduced and...they presented no real challenge" to the regime.<sup>621</sup> Iranian President Rafsanjani oversaw the arrest of many Mujaheddin members in December of 1991 to ensure domestic tranquility in the months before the balloting of 1992.<sup>622</sup>

The Mujaheddin, although still nominally active, have been effectively excluded from the political process in Iran through adroit maneuvering by the government. The political exclusion was made even more effective by military suppression coupled with theological ostracism. In the repression following the Iranian Revolution, the Mujaheddin bore a heavy burden in the regime's process of coercive power consolidation (see Table 2 on page 189 for a comparison of the claims of Mujaheddin death tolls by the various sources utilized in this study.)

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<sup>619</sup>Wright, In the Name of God, p. 196.

<sup>620</sup>Zabih, "The Non-Communist Left in Iran," Chelkowski and Pranger, eds., Ideology and Power in the Middle East, p. 253.

<sup>621</sup>Delury, World Encyclopedia, p. 521.

<sup>622</sup>Banks, ed., Political Handbook of the World, p. 359.

### C. THE FEDAYEEN-E-KHALQ

The Marxist Fedayeen-e-Khalq was formed in 1963 in opposition to the monarchy of the Pahlavis.<sup>623</sup> Fedayeen members opposed the Shah throughout the sixties and seventies.<sup>624</sup> They received training from Palestinian organizations and waged an unsuccessful campaign in 1971 against the Shah's security apparatus in Siahkal, located in the Caspian forests of Northern Iran.<sup>625</sup>

In the wake of the Siahkal operation, many Fedayeen members were jailed, and some of them died at the hands of their jailers.<sup>626</sup> Based in the cities of Tehran, Mashhad, Isfahan and Tabriz, the Fedayeen drew its support primarily from the middle class, to include professionals, teachers, civil servants<sup>627</sup> and student organizations.<sup>628</sup> They were revitalized by the Shah's downfall and departure.<sup>629</sup>

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<sup>623</sup>Ibid.

<sup>624</sup>Munson, Henry, Jr., Islam and Revolution in the Middle East (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 57.

<sup>625</sup>Janke, Guerrilla and Terrorist Organisations, p. 231.

<sup>626</sup>Bakhasn, "Historical Setting," Metz, ed., Iran, p. 41.

<sup>627</sup>Afshar, Haleh, Iran: A Revolution in Turmoil (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1985), p. 8.

<sup>628</sup>Ibid.

<sup>629</sup>Hooglund, "Government and Politics," Metz, ed., Iran, p. 211.

The Fedayeen took part in the February 9, 1979 attack on an air force base, siding with the air force technicians who had expressed support for Khomeini in the face of reprisals from the Shah's Imperial Guards.<sup>630</sup> The Fedayeen also played a crucial role in distributing guns and opening up "prisons, police stations, armories and Tehran's major military bases."<sup>631</sup> Due to memories of repression at the hands of the Shah's armed forces, the Fedayeen called for the complete dismantlement of the regular armed forces.<sup>632</sup>

The Fedayeen attacked the United States Embassy compound on February 14, killing an Iranian employee, wounding a Marine guard, and taking American prisoners. They were convinced to release the prisoners, but the incident served as an example of the lack of stability within Iran.<sup>633</sup> During that time, Khomeini accused the Fedayeen of receiving supplies, to include weapons and money, from the United States.<sup>634</sup>

Fedayeen members were part of the anti-government activities that took place in Gonbad-e-Qavus in March of 1979. With the Turkomans, they demanded a boycott on the referendum for an

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<sup>630</sup>Munson, Islam and Revolution in the Middle East, p. 64.

<sup>631</sup>Keddie, Roots of Revolution, p. 257.

<sup>632</sup>Chubin and Tripp, Iran and Iraq at War, p. 35.

<sup>633</sup>Rubin, Paved With Good Intentions, p. 281.

<sup>634</sup>Ibid., p. 280.

Islamic Republic,<sup>635</sup> stating there were not enough choices on the ballot.<sup>636</sup> The Fedayeen indicated that Iran should have democratic institutions before the constitutional referendum.<sup>637</sup> During the demonstrations, fighting broke out between Fedayeen backed Turkomans and government forces that lasted eight days.<sup>638</sup> Due to their aid and support for the Turkomans, the Fedayeen were referred to by Khomeini as "disruptionists" who were spreading "poison and disunion among our people."<sup>639</sup>

The Fedayeen were called "counterrevolutionaries"<sup>640</sup> and "armed trouble-making individuals" who came to Gonbad-e-Qavus from "outside."<sup>641</sup> As the short conflict wound on, the Interior Ministry theologically denounced the "satanic

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<sup>635</sup>Kifner, "Turkomans Battle Iranian Forces in New Outbreak of tribal Separatism," New York Times, March 28, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>636</sup>Jaynes, "Landslide Victory for Khomeini Reported in Voting," New York Times, April 1, 1979, p. 6.

<sup>637</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 173.

<sup>638</sup>Kifner, "Iran Troubled by Traditional Resistance of Its Minorities," New York Times, April 11, 1979, p. 8.

<sup>639</sup>Kifner, "Iran Winds Up Campaign to Get Out Vote Today for an Islamic Republic," New York Times, March 30, 1979, p. 6.

<sup>640</sup>"Spokesman Entezam Comments on Unrest, 'Superpower' Presence," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1030 GMT, 01 Apr 79 (LD011330), April 2, 1979, p. R14.

<sup>641</sup>"Prime Minister: Army Will Restore Peace in Gonbad-E-Kavus," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1300 GMT, 01 Apr 79 (LD011450), April 2, 1979, p. R15.

designs" of the Fedayeen in an attempt to alienate them from their Turkoman allies.<sup>642</sup> The Fedayeen yielded to superior air<sup>643</sup> and ground forces in early April.<sup>644</sup>

In early May of 1979, the announcement of the formation of the Pasdaran fueled suspicion that the government would attempt to take the Fedayeen's weapons away in an attempt to establish legitimacy on the part of the government.<sup>645</sup> The announcement came as the government was trying to consolidate its control among Islamic and leftist factions.<sup>646</sup>

In August of 1979, pro-Khomeini demonstrators attacked and ransacked the Fedayeen's Tehran headquarters. Four Fedayeen members were beaten and had to be hospitalized as a result.<sup>647</sup> The attacks were in retaliation for a leftist protest that erupted into a riot between Islamic and leftist

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<sup>642</sup>"Interior Ministry Issues Message on Gonbad-E-Kavus," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1030 GMT, 03 Apr 79 (LD031442), April 4, 1979, p. R8.

<sup>643</sup>Kifner, "Turkomans Battle Iranian Forces in New Outbreak of tribal Separatism," New York Times, March 28, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>644</sup>"Gonbad-E Kavus Fighting Continues Despite Cease-Fire," London Reuter, in English, FBIS, 2036 GMT, 01 Apr 79 (WA022056), April 3, 1979, p. R8.

<sup>645</sup>Kifner, "Khomeini Organizes a New Armed Force," New York Times, May 7, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>646</sup>Ibid.

<sup>647</sup>"Khomeini's Backers Raid Headquarters of Iranian Leftists," New York Times, August 14, 1979, p. 1.

factions, injuring hundreds of people.<sup>648</sup> The Fedayeen denounced the government's moves to control the press and the religious nature of the Iranian Revolution, contending it was "not progressive enough."<sup>649</sup> A government soldier who took part in the raid on the Fedayeen's headquarters later scattered leftist literature on the street, referring to it as "Communist garbage."<sup>650</sup>

In response to the events of the previous days, a Fedayeen spokesman stated

We are moving from anarchy to fascism...People are being jailed...Newspapers are being shut down. Political views are being suppressed by blinded fanatics who claim the right to rule in the name of Islam.<sup>651</sup>

The Fedayeen then went underground, fueling speculation that its opposition to the regime was at an end.<sup>652</sup>

The Fedayeen also assisted the Turkomans who battled government forces in Gonbad-e-Qavus from February 9 - 12, 1980.<sup>653</sup> Government propaganda accused the Fedayeen of being

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<sup>648</sup>"A Tehran Protest on Papers' Closure Erupts into Rioting," New York Times, August 13, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>649</sup>"Khomeini's Backers Raid Headquarters of Iranian Leftists," New York Times, August 14, 1979, p. 9.

<sup>650</sup>Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>651</sup>Ibrahim, "Unrest Said to Show Rising Opposition to Khomeini," New York Times, August 17, 1979, p. 2.

<sup>652</sup>"Khomeini Offers Money to Kurds In Apparent Effort to End Uprising," New York Times, August 23, 1979, p. 4.

<sup>653</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 171.

the "bloodthirsty hand of foreign mercenaries" who represented a counterrevolution that was "terrified by the flourishing of the Islamic Revolution."<sup>654</sup> The Revolutionary Guards eventually blamed the Fedayeen for the disturbances<sup>655</sup> and arrested four members of the organization.<sup>656</sup> The Fedayeen were labeled as an "anti-Islamic" group as well as a "counterrevolutionary" one, signifying their status as official theological and political enemies of the government.<sup>657</sup>

On April 19, 1980, an official campaign was initiated to "purge the country's universities and colleges of radical student groups."<sup>658</sup> This was brought about by a proclamation from the Khomeini faction that an "Islamic purge" was necessary in order to deny the Fedayeen "their most fruitful

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<sup>654</sup>"Revolution Guards Statement," Tehran Domestic Service, in Persian, FBIS, 1700 GMT, 09 Feb 80 (LD091850), February 11, 1980, p. 28.

<sup>655</sup>"More on Clashes," London BBC World Service in English, FBIS, 0600 GMT, 11 Feb 80 (TA110634), February 11, 1980, p. 32.

<sup>656</sup>"Casualties from Fighting," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 1051 GMT, 10 Feb 80 (LD101144), February 11, 1980, p. 31.

<sup>657</sup>"Disturbances in Gonbad-E-Qavus Reported," Tehran Domestic Service in Persian, FBIS, 2030 GMT, 11 Feb 80 (LD112220), February 12, 1980, p. 18.

<sup>658</sup>Allaway, "Student violence leads to Tehran purges," Times, April 19, 1980, p. 5.

bases for recruiting and organization."<sup>659</sup> Another ayatollah stated the need to "kick out the leftists" with the "use of the great force of the masses against them."<sup>660</sup>

On July 4, 1980, Ayatollah Montazeri called for the dissolution of the Fedayeen. Montazeri stated there was no room in Iran for leftists and that the government would tolerate no opposition to the religious regime of Ayatollah Khomeini.<sup>661</sup>

After the Iraqi invasion of Iran, the Fedayeen supported the war effort in Iran and called for "the defence of the revolution and independence of the country in the face of attacks from the Iraqi fascist regime."<sup>662</sup>

Fedayeen members and supporters were attacked by government supporters in Tehran in early February 1981 when the Fedayeen gathered to commemorate the second anniversary of the Iranian Revolution.<sup>663</sup> Government forces and religious supporters used a variety of weapons against the Fedayeen, injuring at least 45, some of whom were later treated for bullet and stab

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<sup>659</sup>Ibid.

<sup>660</sup>Ibid.

<sup>661</sup>Fisk, "Iran demand for ban on left-wing opposition," Times, July 5, 1980, p. 1.

<sup>662</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 173.

<sup>663</sup>Allaway, "Many demonstrators arrested in violent Tehran street clashes," Times, February 7, 1981, p. 5.



wounds. Many Fedayeen members were also taken away for questioning. In the wake of the violence, the government demonized the Fedayeen by accusing them of "working for their American masters" to foment dissent in Tehran.<sup>664</sup>

With the dismissal of Bani-Sadr from the Presidency in June of 1981, the Fedayeen "joined the Mojahedin uprising...and consequently lost most of its cadres in the ensuing confrontation with the regime."<sup>665</sup> The mass arrests and executions of the 18 month "reign of terror,"<sup>666</sup> while focused primarily on the Mujaheddin, took its toll on the Fedayeen as well.<sup>667</sup> "Nearly all those arrested and tried since Mr. Bani-Sadr's downfall have been supporters of the Mujahidin or of the Marxist Fedayeen group."<sup>668</sup>

The government dealt a further blow to the Fedayeen in early 1982 when it discovered and destroyed the organization's underground publishing facility and political cells, killing

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<sup>664</sup>Ibid.

<sup>665</sup>Hooglund, "Government and Politics," Metz, ed., Iran, p. 217.

<sup>666</sup>Wright, In the Name of God, p. 99.

<sup>667</sup>The mass executions and arrests are detailed in the section of this paper dealing with the Mujaheddin. The government's anti-leftist campaign and the way in which it was chronicled in various periodicals, publications and books would indicate that the Fedayeen were, in many cases, lumped together in the same category as the Mujaheddin when describing the "reign of terror."

<sup>668</sup>"Tehran business leaders executed by firing squads," Times, July 14, 1981, p. 5.

many partisans.<sup>669</sup> The Fedayeen was declared illegal in 1983<sup>670</sup> in the wake of mass arrests.<sup>671</sup>

The Fedayeen was sufficiently "decimated"<sup>672</sup> by the Revolutionary Guards in the Iranian Revolution's political purges<sup>673</sup> that it "had effectively ceased to pose a serious threat to the Iranian regime by the mid-1980s."<sup>674</sup>

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<sup>669</sup>Milani, The Making of Iran's Islamic Revolution, p. 301.

<sup>670</sup>Although Ayatollah Montazeri called for the dissolution of the Fedayeen in 1980, they were not declared illegal until 1983. The reasons for this delay may be attributed to the Iran-War (which began in September of 1980), and preoccupations with the Kurds and other ethnic minorities.

<sup>671</sup>Ibid., p. 304.

<sup>672</sup>Janke, Guerrilla and Terrorist Organisations, p. 231.

<sup>673</sup>According to Delury's World Encyclopedia, sixty Fedayeen were arrested in one operation in January of 1986, p. 525.

<sup>674</sup>Degenhardt, Revolutionary and Dissident Movements, p. 164.

## V. RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

Before the Iranian Revolution, non-Shi'i religious minorities lived in Iran, co-existing with the Shi'i majority. After the revolution, Khomeini suppressed the Baha'is and the Jews, often drawing the attention of international organizations.<sup>675</sup>

In evaluating the hundreds of executions ordered each year, separating cases of executions for actual crimes from executions based purely on the defendant's beliefs, statements, or associations, was difficult, given the regime's practice of cloaking the latter category with trumped-up charges from the former category.<sup>676</sup>

### A. THE BAHAI'IS

The Baha'i religion was founded in 1863 by Mirza Husain Ali (Baha'ollah), a self-proclaimed prophet.<sup>677</sup> Since its inception, Baha'is in Iran were despised as apostates because they had adhered to another religion after the establishment of Islam<sup>678</sup> and, as a result, were consistently oppressed.<sup>679</sup> In Iran, the Baha'is were commonly regarded as Zionists who

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<sup>675</sup>Kechichian and Sadri, "National Security," Metz, ed., Iran, p. 296.

<sup>676</sup>Ibid.

<sup>677</sup>Lapidus, A History of Islamic Societies, p. 576.

<sup>678</sup>Degenhardt, Revolutionary and Dissident Movements, p. 170.

<sup>679</sup>Delury, World Encyclopedia, p. 533.

threatened to take over and control the economy.<sup>680</sup> Additionally, due to their illegitimate status in Islamic eyes, the Baha'is have never been formally recognized by any Iranian government.<sup>681</sup>

In 1955, the Baha'i faith was proclaimed illegal and the main Baha'i Center in Tehran was publicly destroyed by leading government officials.<sup>682</sup> Concerning religious oppression in the Middle East, Alan Richards and John Waterbury wrote in A Political Economy of the Middle East that "Some minorities have not fared well; but none worse than the Baha'is in Iran."<sup>683</sup> Concerning the state of Baha'ism in Iran, Philip K. Hitti wrote "the most interesting religion modern Persia gave the world has been denied a place in the land of its origin."<sup>684</sup>

When the Iranian Revolution occurred, there were approximately 450,000 Baha'is in Iran.<sup>685</sup> Their loyalty to

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<sup>680</sup>Tabari, Azar, "The Role of the Clergy in Modern Iranian Politics," Keddie, ed., Religion and Politics in Iran, p. 68.

<sup>681</sup>Keddie and Cole, "Introduction," Cole and Keddie, eds., Shi'ism and Social Protest, p. 25.

<sup>682</sup>Esposito, John L., Islam and Politics, Revised, Second Edition (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1987), p. 123.

<sup>683</sup>Richards and Waterbury, A Political Economy of the Middle East, p. 346.

<sup>684</sup>Hitti, The Near East in History, p. 405.

<sup>685</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 175.

the Shah and their status as religious non-entities<sup>686</sup> had resulted in the appointment of Baha'is to key medical, management and administrative posts in spite of anti-Baha'i "sustained and systematic persecution" which relegated them to status as "second-class citizens."<sup>687</sup> The Shah's opponents criticized him for permitting the Baha'is to occupy important government and military positions at the expense of Shi'i Muslims.<sup>688</sup>

The importance of the Baha'is in these posts may have been exaggerated due to the fact that they were regarded as infidels.<sup>689</sup> Their loyalty to the Shah also drew the attention of Ayatollah Khomeini, who stated they were an unlawful political faction that would not be accepted.<sup>690</sup> This accusation selectively ignored the Baha'i prohibition against any participation in political movements or taking any sort of political office.<sup>691</sup>

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<sup>686</sup>Delury, World Encyclopedia, p. 533.

<sup>687</sup>Coleman, Michael, "Eleven vanish into unknown jail," Times, August 30, 1980, p. 4.

<sup>688</sup>Esposito, Islam and Politics, p. 231.

<sup>689</sup>Keddie, Roots of Revolution, p. 242.

<sup>690</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 175.

<sup>691</sup>Coleman, "Bahais pay price for taking no sides," Times, July 15, 1980, p. 6.

Early in the Iranian Revolution, Ayatollah Sadoughi called for Iranians to "chase the Baha'is you know from all administrative positions and deliver them to the revolutionary court."<sup>692</sup> Sadoughi was later to proclaim that the Baha'is were "mahdour-e damn" which translates as "those whose blood may be shed."<sup>693</sup> In retrospect, history would reveal that the Iranian Government's "persecution of the Baha'is was particularly ferocious."<sup>694</sup> Throughout Iran, Baha'is were arrested and held without charge in Tehran, Tabriz, Shiraz and Yazd.<sup>695</sup> The persecution of the Baha'is was later revealed to have no legal basis<sup>696</sup> and was present in all phases of the Iranian Revolution.<sup>697</sup>

Shortly after February 11, 1979, unidentified persons broke into Baha'i offices in Tehran and rifled them, taking membership lists of Baha'is in Iran, which may have been

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<sup>692</sup>Ibid.

<sup>693</sup>Fischer, Michael M.J., "Imam Khomeini: Four Levels of Understanding," Esposito, ed., Voices of Resurgent Islam (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 153.

<sup>694</sup>Johnson, Paul, Modern Times: The World from the Twenties to the Nineties, Revised Edition (New York: HarperPerennial, 1991), p. 713.

<sup>695</sup>Coleman, "Bahais pay price for taking no sides," Times, July 15, 1980, p. 6.

<sup>696</sup>Keddie, "Islamic Revivalism Past and Present, with Emphasis on Iran," Rosen, ed., Iran Since the Revolution, p. 14.

<sup>697</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

handed over to anti-Baha'i groups.<sup>698</sup> Baha'i meetings and classes were interrupted and broken up as well.<sup>699</sup> Baha'i properties and holdings, to include the Baha'is' main investment company,<sup>700</sup> were also seized under the justification that the Baha'is were supporters of Zionism,<sup>701</sup> because the world center for the Baha'is was located in Haifa, Israel.<sup>702</sup> Four charges were commonly leveled at the Baha'is: "encouragement of prostitution, pro-Zionism, anti-Islam and sending funds to Israel."<sup>703</sup>

On July 13, 1980, Dr. Faramarz Samandari and Mr. Yadullah Astani, two Baha'is held in detention, were removed from their jail cells and executed.<sup>704</sup> Dr. Samandari was charged with "the promotion of prostitution" for signing a Baha'i marriage certificate.<sup>705</sup>

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<sup>698</sup>Ibid.

<sup>699</sup>Ibid.

<sup>700</sup>Degenhardt, Revolutionary and Dissident Movements, p. 170.

<sup>701</sup>Ibid.

<sup>702</sup>Delury, World Encyclopedia, p. 533.

<sup>703</sup>Coleman, "Bahais pay price for taking no sides," Times, July 15, 1980, p. 6.

<sup>704</sup>Coleman, "Eleven vanish into unknown jail," Times, August 30, 1980, p. 4.

<sup>705</sup>Ibid.

On August 21, 1980, in response to Ayatollah Sadoughi's appeal, nine members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Iran were arrested and taken to an unknown location under suspicion of espionage.<sup>706</sup> At the same time, ten Baha'is were executed for alleged "involvement in a planned coup."<sup>707</sup> On September 7, 1980, seven Baha'is arrested in June of that year were executed in Yazd. In a secret trial, they were charged with spying. Three of the executed persons were alleged leaders of the local Baha'i community.<sup>708</sup>

On December 17, 1980, two Baha'is were assassinated in Khorassan for unspecified reasons.<sup>709</sup>

On January 10, 1981, Revolutionary Guards interrogated Professor Manuchihr Hakim about his activities as a Baha'i. He was a physician and member of the Tehran University faculty. On January 12, he was shot and killed in his office.<sup>710</sup>

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<sup>706</sup>ibid.

<sup>707</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 176.

<sup>708</sup>"Iranian Cabinet dispute flares up in Majlis," Times, September 10, 1980, p. 6.

<sup>709</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 176.

<sup>710</sup>"Hostages legislation delayed in Tehran," Times, January 14, 1981, p. 5.



On 14 Jun 1981, seven Baha'is were executed by a firing squad.<sup>711</sup> As the toll of Baha'is executed since the Iranian Revolution mounted to 40, 50 British Ministers of Parliament sent an appeal to Ayatollah Khomeini to cease the killing of Baha'is and other minorities in Iran: "We strongly urge you to use your personal and moral authority to inquire into the deaths of members of ethnic and religious minorities, including the Baha'i community."<sup>712</sup>

The government became so intent on persecuting the Baha'is that on August 12, 1981, 150 Baha'is, an undetermined number of them deceased, were ordered to report to the local revolutionary court in Yazd by August 15. The Baha'is who did report were told that they could be charged for their religious beliefs, not any specific crimes. Additionally, furniture, livestock and crops were at the time being systematically seized from Baha'is in the area.<sup>713</sup>

In response to government persecution of Iranian Baha'is, in late 1981, the United Nations Human Rights Sub-Commission

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<sup>711</sup>Allaway, "Bani-Sadr defies ultimatum by Ayatollah," Times, June 16, 1981, p. 1.

<sup>712</sup>"Iran sends four more to firing squads," Times, July 16, 1981, p. 7.

<sup>713</sup>Allaway, "Danish ship seized by Iranians," Times, August 13, 1981, p. 4.

requested that increased pressure be applied to Iran in order to cease anti-Baha'i activities.<sup>714</sup>

In late December of 1981, the Iranian government executed eight members of the Baha'i National Spiritual Assembly. Baha'i sources claimed the Baha'is were killed for their religious beliefs. Ayatollah Moussavi-Ardabili, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, stated the Baha'is were guilty of spying for unnamed foreign countries.<sup>715</sup> The Iranian Government had earlier denied the December execution of the eight Baha'is.<sup>716</sup>

The Baha'i National Assembly issued a statement that Iranian firing squads executed six Baha'i leaders on January 1, 1982.<sup>717</sup> The Assembly alleged that the Iranian Government was trying to eradicate the Baha'i faith from its birthplace. The six executed Baha'is were arrested in December of 1981 along with a woman who was providing them refuge. They were then sentenced without charges or a trial.<sup>718</sup> According to

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<sup>714</sup>Allaway, "Two killed in Tehran street gunfights," Times, September 10, 1981, p. 6.

<sup>715</sup>"Bahais executed in Iran," Times, January 9, 1982, p. 5.

<sup>716</sup>"Iran executes 18 insurgents," Times, January 4, 1982, p. 4.

<sup>717</sup>"Bahais executed in Iran," Times, January 9, 1982, p. 5.

<sup>718</sup>Ibid.

Baha'i sources, the Iranian government had acknowledged the execution of 97 Baha'is since the Iranian Revolution.<sup>719</sup>

The Times reported in early 1981 that the Iranian government requested that its employees state their religion.<sup>720</sup> A number of Baha'i civil servants viewed this as a calculated maneuver to remove Baha'is from their positions through legal maneuvering.<sup>721</sup> The penalty for refusing to comply with the government census was dismissal and possible incarceration. One civil servant commented that if "somebody gave false information concerning his religious background, he would risk the danger of being identified and executed."<sup>722</sup>

The Times reported that Iranian Baha'is in Hong Kong were ordered back to Iran to face unspecified charges.<sup>723</sup> A Hong Kong spokesman for the Baha'is stated that the Baha'is did not want to return, fearing they would be the victims of a "religious purge with political significance" upon their return to Iran.<sup>724</sup> The Iranian consulate in Hong Kong told

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<sup>719</sup>Ibid.

<sup>720</sup>"Executed Iranians 'had tongues pulled out,'" Times, January 7, 1981, p. 4.

<sup>721</sup>Ibid.

<sup>722</sup>Ibid.

<sup>723</sup>"Hongkong Bahais petition for asylum," Times, March 5, 1982, p. 9.

<sup>724</sup>Ibid.

the Baha'is that their passports would not be renewed upon expiration.<sup>725</sup>

On July 12, 1982, The Times reported that four Baha'is were executed on July 11.<sup>726</sup> The Baha'is were cryptically charged with "being members of an organization trying to overthrow the government."<sup>727</sup> Three more Baha'is were hung in secret by the government in March of 1983.<sup>728</sup> The secret hangings continued in June of that year when 22 Baha'is were executed in Shiraz.<sup>729</sup> They had been condemned to death the previous February and kept in detention in order to extract self-incriminating confessions. The Baha'is had been beaten in order to persuade them to renounce their faith and become Muslims. When they refused, they were eventually executed.<sup>730</sup>

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<sup>725</sup>Ibid.

<sup>726</sup>Teimourian, "Iran's hawks pressing for a full invasion," Times, July 12, 1982, p. 4.

<sup>727</sup>Ibid.

<sup>728</sup>"Bahais hanged," Times, March 17, 1983, p. 6.

<sup>729</sup>Coleman, "Ten Bahai women hanged in Shiraz," Times, June 21, 1983, p. 4.

<sup>730</sup>Ibid.

During the month of July, 1983, 22 more Baha'is were arrested in the cities of Tehran, Shiraz and Mashhad. All of them were accused of espionage.<sup>731</sup>

The Times reported on November 12, 1984 that the Iranian Government had executed three Baha'is, including Ahmed Bashari, a member of the disbanded Baha'i National Assembly.<sup>732</sup>

Iranian Baha'is were consistently executed as a result of espionage charges. They were usually charged with Zionist spying for Israel.<sup>733</sup> Other charges brought against the Baha'is involved the establishment of a dissident Baha'i movement.<sup>734</sup>

Whereas Christian, Jews and Zoroastrians were recognized in Iran's Constitution, the Baha'is were not<sup>735</sup> and were "pointedly excluded from any constitutional rights or representation in parliament."<sup>736</sup> In fact, the Baha'is were

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<sup>731</sup>"Iran spying denied by Red Cross," Times, July 29, 1983, p. 6.

<sup>732</sup>"Bahais executed," Times, November 12, 1984, p. 5.

<sup>733</sup>"Bahais executed in Iran," Times, January 9, 1982, p. 5.

<sup>734</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 176.

<sup>735</sup>Ibid., p. 175.

<sup>736</sup>Wright, In the Name of God, p. 106.

the "only major religious community denied representation by the constitution."<sup>737</sup>

According to Revolutionary and Dissident Movements, Iran declared all Baha'i institutions, "including educational and charitable ones" illegal.<sup>738</sup> Additionally, "the Islamic Revolution Prosecutor-General insisted no individual had been executed on religious grounds, and that all those killed had been found guilty of espionage or treason."<sup>739</sup>

The Iranian Government did not recognize Baha'ism as a religion<sup>740</sup> nor allow them any seats in the Parliament.<sup>741</sup>

Going one step further, the Islamic Republican Party "attempted the total destruction of the country's Baha'i community,"<sup>742</sup> executing Baha'is "primarily because they were Baha'i."<sup>743</sup>

As events during the Iranian Revolution began to enter the realm of public knowledge, it became clear that Iran's

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<sup>737</sup>Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>738</sup>Degenhardt, Revolutionary and Dissident Movements, p. 170.

<sup>739</sup>Ibid.

<sup>740</sup>Ibid.

<sup>741</sup>Delury, World Encyclopedia, p. 533.

<sup>742</sup>Atkin, "The Islamic Republic and the Soviet Union," Keddie and Hooglund, eds., The Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Republic, p. 201.

<sup>743</sup>Rubin, Paved with Good Intentions, p. 305.

largest religious minority, the Baha'is, have actually been subjected to officially sanctioned persecution. At least two hundred Baha'is have been executed, and an estimated 767 were in prison by the end of 1985. Baha'is are forbidden to hold government jobs or attend public schools. The ruling clerics justify such harsh measures against the Baha'i on grounds that the adherents are apostates, a reference to the fact that the religion originated among Shi'i Muslims in Iran in the mid-nineteenth century."<sup>744</sup>

In June of 1988, the Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations of the United States House of Representatives held hearings on the religious persecution of Baha'is in Iran. In the hearings, Illinois Representative John Porter described the behavior of the Khomeini regime towards the Iranian Baha'i community as "institutionalized hostility."<sup>745</sup> The eventual outcome of the hearings was a resolution calling on the Islamic Republic of Iran to cease anti-Baha'i activities and "restore fully the rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including freedom of thought, conscience and religion education, and equal protection of the law."<sup>746</sup>

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<sup>744</sup>Hooglund, "Iran 1980-1985," Keddie and Hooglund, eds., The Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Republic, pp. 24-5.

<sup>745</sup>Hearing before the Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations, Religious Persecution of Baha'is in Iran, 100th Cong., 2nd Sess., Remarks of Representative Porter (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, June 29, 1988), p. 5.

<sup>746</sup>Ibid., 100th Congress Resolution 310, June 2, 1988, p. 9.

John L. Esposito summarized the state of Baha'is in Iran in his book Islam and Politics:

Although government officials insist that Baha'is have been punished for political crimes and not religious reasons, the rights of non-Muslim minorities in an Islamic state remain an unresolved issue.<sup>747</sup>

#### B. THE JEWS

Throughout the Muslim world, the Jews enjoy special considerations as Ahl al-dhimmah, or dhimmi ("people of the book").<sup>748</sup> Their status stems from the Prophet's reverence for Hebrew scriptures and his regard for their revealed religion.<sup>749</sup>

The Jewish presence in Iran dates back for over 2,500 years.<sup>750</sup> Iranian Jews descended from those who stayed in the region after the Babylonian captivity, after the Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem by the Achaemenid rulers of the first Iranian empire.<sup>751</sup> A number of Iraqi Jews chose to immigrate to Iran rather than to Israel in 1948, which augmented the Iranian Jewish population. The Jews in Iran

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<sup>747</sup>Esposito, Islam and Politics, p. 230.

<sup>748</sup>Hitti, History of the Arabs: From the Earliest Times to the Present (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951), p. 233.

<sup>749</sup>Ibid.

<sup>750</sup>Delury, World Encyclopedia, p. 534.

<sup>751</sup>Hooglund, "The Society and Its Environment," Metz, ed., Iran, p. 128.



eventually became culturally and linguistically indistinguishable from ethnic Persians.<sup>752</sup> Although regarded as inferior by Persian Shi'i, they integrated into Persian society and appreciated its culture.<sup>753</sup>

The Shah's toleration of Jews made him appear to some as the "hireling of the Americans," as his detractors liked to point out.<sup>754</sup> In the parliamentary crisis of 1961, Ayatollah Khomeini intimated that the Koran and Islam were in danger from Jews and Zionists, indicating what would also be his sentiments in a few years.<sup>755</sup> Throughout his period of exile, Khomeini referred to the Jews only in the most vitriolic of terms, scarcely disguising his contempt.<sup>756</sup>

When the Shah left Iran, there were approximately 100,000 Jews living in the country, mostly in Tehran, Shiraz, Hamadan, Isfahan, and Kashan.<sup>757</sup> In the early days of the Iranian Revolution, the Jewish community of Tehran stated their desire to be part of the new regime and attempted to distance

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<sup>752</sup>Cottam, Nationalism in Iran (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1979), p. 83.

<sup>753</sup>Ibid.

<sup>754</sup>Rubin, Paved With Good Intentions, p. 266.

<sup>755</sup>Bakhash, The Reign of the Ayatollahs, p. 26.

<sup>756</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>757</sup>Delury, World Encyclopedia, p. 534.

themselves from Israel.<sup>758</sup> Although Jewish leaders said they expected some anti-Jewish violence, they issued statements emphasizing that their primary allegiance was to Iran and not to Israel. In support of this statement, they cited a local Jewish hospital's treatment of many Muslims wounded in an anti-Shah demonstration in 1978.<sup>759</sup>

Stating a further desire for integration within the new regime, the Jewish leaders proclaimed

We want cooperation between the two peoples, Moslems and Jews, regardless of religion...Khomeini has declared that the minorities would have a better chance to prosper now than under the old regime...we want to work with him.<sup>760</sup>

Jews also took part in anti-Shah demonstrations in Shiraz. Their cry was for unity; "Muslim, Jew, Christian: Shout down with the shah!"<sup>761</sup>

Khomeini met with Iranian Jews in April of 1979 and offered his assurances that they had a part to play in the new Iran as long as they did not associate with "Zionists and oppressors of Islam."<sup>762</sup>

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<sup>758</sup>Jaynes, "Jews Say They're Part of Iran Revolution," New York Times, February 22, 1979, p. 3.

<sup>759</sup>Ibid.

<sup>760</sup>Ibid.

<sup>761</sup>Hegland, "Two Images of Husain," Keddie, ed., Religion and Politics in Iran, p. 218.

<sup>762</sup>Kazemi, Farhad, "Iran, Israel, and the Arab-Israeli Balance," Rosen, ed., Iran Since the Revolution, p. 91.

On May 9, 1979, a prominent Jewish businessman was executed by a revolutionary firing squad. Habib Elghanian was charged with spying and raising money for Israel. As the first non-Muslim killed by the new Islamically oriented regime, his death alarmed the Iranian Jewish community so much that no one wanted to attend his funeral.<sup>763</sup> The Iranian Government stated Elghanian was guilty of "friendship with the enemies of God and being an enemy of the friends of God,"<sup>764</sup> once again undertaking repressive action using a theological justification. The Jewish population also became alarmed as the Shi'i clerics ceased to distinguish between Judaism and Zionism, often employing anti-Semitic rhetoric.<sup>765</sup>

As the Iranian Revolution progressed, anti-Jewish rhetoric became common. Coupled with violent statements concerning Israel and Zionism, many of Iran's Jews became frightened and left the country.<sup>766</sup> Many Jews were dismissed from civil service and teaching jobs for no other reason than the fact

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<sup>763</sup>Kifner, "Firing Squads Kill 2 Iran Businessmen," New York Times, May 10, 1979, p. 1.

<sup>764</sup>Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>765</sup>Kazemi, "Iran, Israel, and the Arab-Israeli Balance," Rosen, ed., Iran Since the Revolution, p. 90.

<sup>766</sup>Rubin, Paved With Good Intentions, p. 305.

that they were Jewish.<sup>767</sup> Additionally, many synagogues were desecrated.<sup>768</sup>

As restrictions upon the Jews became harsher, many were prohibited from emigrating to Israel because that was viewed as a "Zionist act" by the Iranian Government.<sup>769</sup> The government impounded the passports of many Jews who had visited Israel to ensure their inability to commit any such acts.<sup>770</sup>

Khomeini also severed diplomatic ties to Israel and later permitted the Palestine Liberation Organization to house their mission in Tehran in the former Israeli Embassy.<sup>771</sup>

In May of 1979, a Jewish woman was tortured and beheaded in her Shiraz home by unknown assailants. Her funeral was disrupted by demonstrators who shouted

This is only the beginning. This is nothing compared to what will happen to the Jews.<sup>772</sup>

In May of 1981, several leading members of Tehran's Jewish community were arrested, to include a rabbi and his wife.

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<sup>767</sup>Ibid.

<sup>768</sup>Johnson, Modern Times, p. 713.

<sup>769</sup>Degenhardt, Political Dissent, p. 176.

<sup>770</sup>Rubin, Paved With Good Intentions, p. 305.

<sup>771</sup>Kazemi, "Iran, Israel, and the Arab-Israeli Balance," Rosen, ed., Iran Since the Revolution, p. 90.

<sup>772</sup>"Killing of Iranian Jew Reported," New York Times, June 7, 1979, p. 7.

They were charged with receiving payment to help Iranian Jews leave the country in order to avoid military service.<sup>773</sup>

In 1981, an Islamic code of retribution (Layeha-ye Qesas) was presented to the Parliament. Under this new "Bill of Vengeance," Jews could be held accountable for crimes that they had not committed. If a Muslim alleged that a Jew had committed a crime, that Jew could be required to pay a blood money compensation, or, be executed under certain circumstances.<sup>774</sup>

The law was passed in 1982.<sup>775</sup> In the wake of this type of discrimination, many Jews left Iran for Europe, Israel, and the United States.<sup>776</sup>

During the course of the Iranian Revolution, some "were condemned primarily because they were...Jews."<sup>777</sup> By the mid-1980's, the number of Jews in Iran had dropped to approximately 40,000 due to government policies and repression.<sup>778</sup>

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<sup>773</sup>"Jews' arrest in Tehran is confirmed," Times, May 19, 1981, p. 6.

<sup>774</sup>Kazemi, "Iran, Israel, and the Arab-Israeli Balance," Rosen, ed., Iran Since the Revolution, p. 91.

<sup>775</sup>Ibid.

<sup>776</sup>Delury, World Encyclopedia, p. 534.

<sup>777</sup>Rubin, Paved With Good Intentions, p. 288.

<sup>778</sup>Delury, World Encyclopedia, p. 534.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The death of Ayatollah Khomeini on June 3, 1989 marked the passing of an era for Iran. The defeat of Saddam Hussein and the breakup of the Soviet Union also altered the context of Iran's views toward itself and the rest of the world.<sup>779</sup>

There has been no small amount of speculation concerning what changes might occur in Iran's internal policies towards the military, ethnic minorities, political opposition parties, and religious minorities. Recent studies seem to indicate that although Rafsanjani's government has made some progress towards addressing Iran's many internal problems, the political process in Iran has been relegated to a lower priority due to the economic problems and a shortage of food and consumer goods.<sup>780</sup>

In retrospect, the very existence of the Islamic Republic belies Skocpol's contention that the military would have had to disintegrate due to outside pressures for the revolution to succeed. In spite of the fact that the Pahlavis had the most

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<sup>779</sup>Hooglund, "Iran's Security Policies: 'New Thinking' or New Means to Pursue Old Objectives?" Dorr, Steven R. and Slater, Neysa M., eds., Balance of Power in Central And Southwest Asia (NP: Defense Academic and Research Support Program, 1992), p. 51.

<sup>780</sup>Schahgaldian, "The Current Political and Economic Environment in Iran," Dorr and Slater, eds., Balance of Power in Central and Southwest Asia, p. 107.

powerful, well-equipped and well trained military machine in the region, this was unable to save them from losing power. On one hand, the Khomeini Regime neutralized the military politically and socially from within, thereby partially negating its effectiveness. On the other hand, the military's hierarchy was structured in such a manner that it was emasculated without the Shah to direct it. The Shah's insistence that the military chiefs deal directly with him, coupled with his prohibition that they have any contact among themselves, prevented effective coordination to counter the revolution and undermined the military's command and control structure at the time when it needed cross-communication most.

In contradiction to Skocpol's theory, the Khomeini Regime came to power not only in spite of the armed forces, but because of them as well. The Khomeini Regime identified the incorporation of the armed forces into its power structure as the crucial element to successful power consolidation and took active measures before and during the revolution to accomplish this. Its appeals to the armed forces to desert the monarchy (who were the backbone of the monarch's power) during the last days of the Pahlavi Regime and join with the Imam's forces were successful.

Having incorporated the armed forces unto itself, the Khomeini Regime left the infrastructure of the military intact. It then embarked upon a purge of the monarchists from the upper ranks, replacing them with "ideologically pure" officers. With the military under its control, the Khomeini Regime then used the armed forces to consolidate its own power by suppressing ethnic minorities, political opposition groups and religious minorities that had been officially labeled "un-Islamic" and "corrupt." By means of a later "ideological purge," the Islamic Republic further ensured military loyalty to the government.

The Islamic Republic demonized its enemies throughout the power consolidation process, labelling those with whom it was displeased as "enemies of God" and "corruption on earth." Through this demonization process, the Islamic Republic provided a jurisprudential and theological justification for its coercive power consolidation by purging those it deemed "impure."

At present, the military is firmly on the side of the government and will be its tool to withstand any external or internal threats that may arise, although the military's primary emphasis remains to defend the country from external attack. Under the Islamic Republic, the military command and

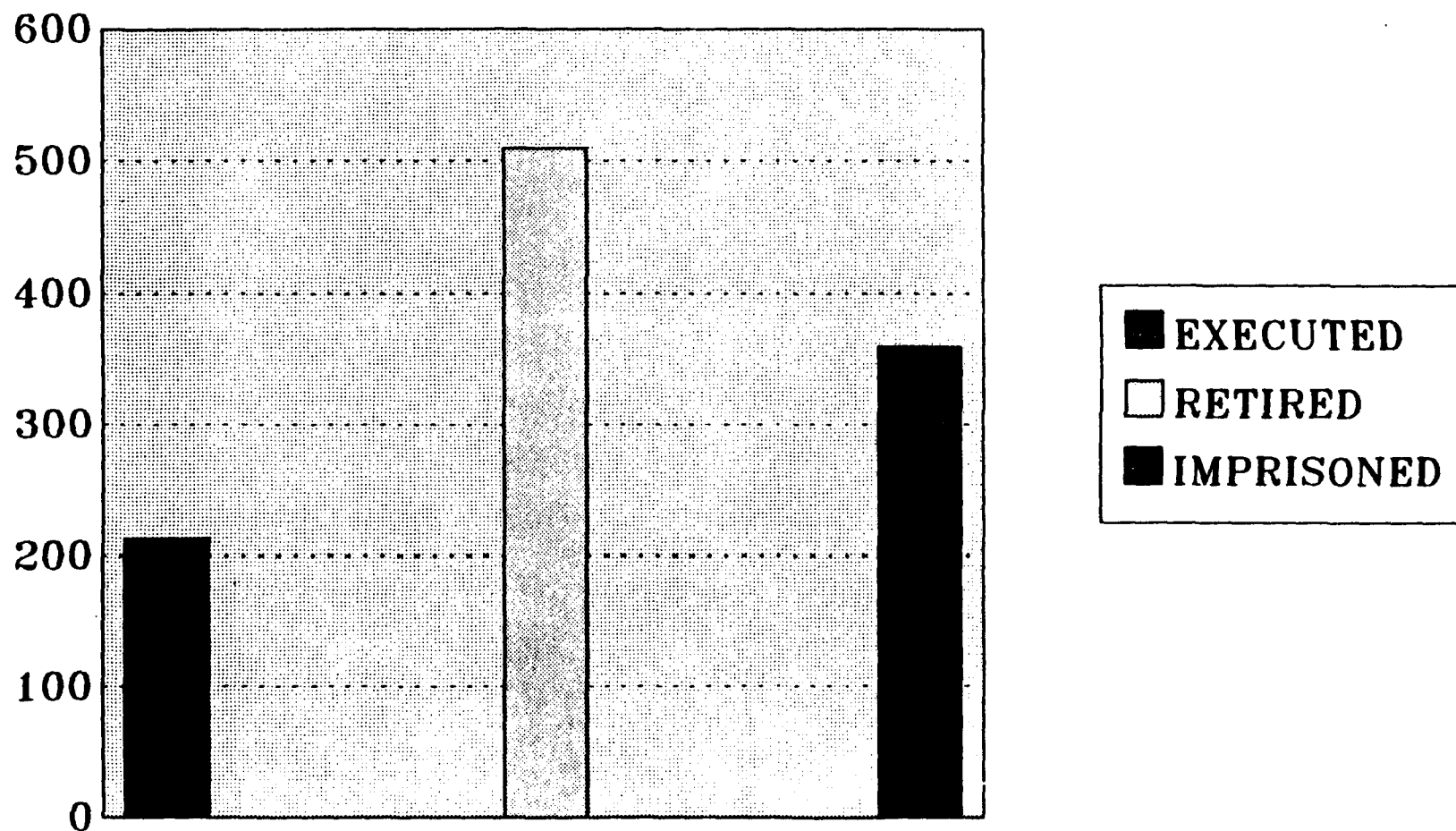


control structure has been realigned and has proven itself in the war with Iraq and the suppression of dissident societal elements.

While the regime has counted on the military to attain and maintain its power (in a variation of Skocpol's theory), the question of whether Iran's armed forces, ethnic minorities, political opposition groups and religious minorities will ever have freedom of expression and political rights under the Iranian Constitution will have to be answered at some indeterminate moment in the future by the Iranian Government. Even if granted freedom of expression and political rights, the repression suffered by the "enemies of God" will stand as a clear legacy of the regime's method of coercive power consolidation.

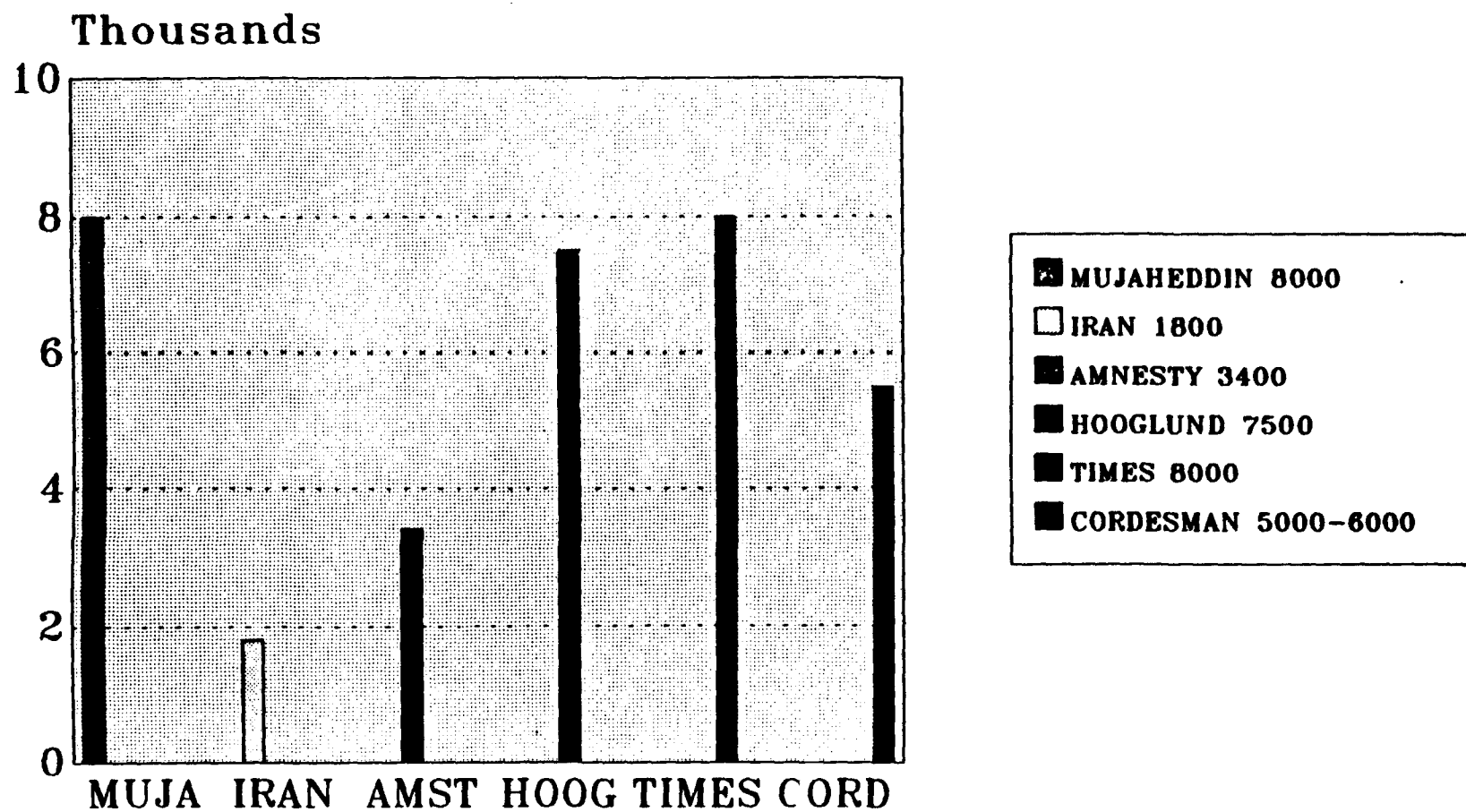
This process transformed "brothers in Islam" into "enemies of God" and "corruption on the earth," providing the Islamic Republic with an aegis under which to neutralize or eliminate these elements of society that it deemed threatening or unnecessary. By doing so, the Islamic Republic remade Iranian society into a more "Islamic" mold in accordance with Khomeini's vision of Shi'ism.

TABLE 1  
REPRESSION OF THE MILITARY



TYPES OF REPRESSION

TABLE 2  
MUJAHEDDIN DEATHS



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